

# Military Culture and Non-Western Religions:

## Conflict and Accommodation

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Master of Theology Thesis

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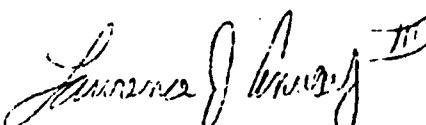
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### Introduction:

I remember in particular one conversation that I had early in 1994 with a sergeant at Fort Irwin, California. He told me that he was leaving the Army soon, and that after he left active duty he planned to join the Nation of Islam in Los Angeles. When I expressed some surprise at his choice of future plans, he told me that he had admired the Nation for some time for their work in the urban ghetto. He also told me that they (the Nation) were doing something to "stand tall". At that time I knew little about the Nation of Islam, the Black Muslim movement or about Buddhist organizations in the United States.

The research that I did for this paper has given me a lot more knowledge about these religious movements. These faiths are not commonly thought of in an American context, both in terms of their heritage and about their present, yet they are part of the American landscape. This paper is an attempt to compare the culture of some of these religious movements with the culture found in the American Army.

As the title implies, I seek in this paper to look at these often little known groups, compare what they emphasize, and look at possible and actual issues in terms of conflict and accommodation. I seek to look at issues of pluralism as it works itself out via the interactions between these selected groups and the U.S. Army. My choice of these groups is based on their potential and actual interactions with the military community.

In terms of definitions, when I say "Black Muslim Movement", I refer to both the current reborn Nation of Islam, headed by National Representative Minister Louis Farrakhan, and the American Muslim Mission, headed by Imam Wallace Deen Muhammad. References to each group will be made by their current (1994) name, due to the fact that there have been many name changes over the years. I choose to use the current names consistently in order to prevent any possible confusion between the two groups based on name changes.

My methodology for this paper is based in part on the approach of Robert Bellah. He emphasized in his book *Beyond Belief* that all groups have some sort of system of belief or

ultimate values beyond any immediate self interest. Using John F. Kennedy's inaugural address as a starting point, Bellah argued that there is a belief system in place regarding the U.S.A., which he called the "Civil Religion" of America. Events such as the references to God in President Kennedy's address, along with the actual swearing in, are illustrations of this "Civil Religion" at work. For Bellah, this civil religion describes "the American Way" along with the emotions and feelings surrounding patriotic fervor.

Bellah's concept of "civil religion" is not intended to imply a "God" based religion in the Western sense in any way. For the purposes of this paper, and to avoid any possible confusion with issues surrounding the separation of church and state, I will use the term "Civil Beliefs" instead of Bellah's term. The term "Civil Beliefs" captures the idea behind what Bellah states without the added and confusing baggage, particularly for military readers.

Also, when I speak of the Army in this paper, I refer primarily to the Army at its grass roots. I am emphasizing the Army at the lower levels in this paper, where policies are implemented and where people live and work, as opposed to national policy levels. I will, however, refer to policies of the Army, since they do heavily impact on the local levels.

Using a methodology of examination and comparison in regards to these "civil beliefs", I plan to key in on the stories, ceremonies, and symbols of the Black Muslim Movement, the Buddhist religious groups in the U.S., and of the U.S. Army. I seek the underlying core beliefs that all groups have, in order to see the interactions and issues that arise or could possibly arise.

I realize that there are other possible approaches, but Bellah's underlying statement that all groups have a belief system gives me a common basis at which to look at two very different groups with often different agendas. I will try to allow each group to tell their own story, and seek to avoid putting in too many of my own biases or beliefs. This will aid, as far as I am able to do this, in providing a more objective look at this subject.

A second source for methodology will come from the work of Max Weber. Weber's categories and more individualistic approach is more helpful at looking at the Black Muslim

Movement itself. Weber's approach is more useful in examining why the old Nation of Islam transformed itself into the American Muslim Mission and adopted a new viewpoint on many issues. Also, Weber's distinction of class and of economics is helpful here.

The outline of this thesis will follow my methodology. Following this introduction, I will describe the Black Muslim Movement and its history in the United States, followed by a description of the major Buddhist movements. Then I will describe the culture of the Army, using my own personal experiences as a starting point. After this descriptive section, an interpretative section follows, looking at the stories, ceremonies, and symbols of each group. Finally, an evaluative section will look at pluralism and issues in pluralism in light of this investigation.

The reason why I chose Islam and Buddhism as the basis for this thesis is due to their differentness in basic perspective, using Peter Berger's analysis. Berger divides the religious experience into two fundamentally different camps, based on what Berger called "two distinct forms of religious experience". All of the major world religions, in Berger's analysis, fall into one of these two religious visions.

One of these two experiences Berger calls the confrontational type. This is the experience of Christianity, Judaism, and Islam, where the believer is in relationship with one divine being. It is called confrontational due to the encounter that it describes between the individual and the divine as separate beings. Here in the confrontational type there is a distinct differentness and separation between the human and the divine.

The other of these two visions Berger calls the interior vision. In this different vision there may or there may not be gods, and any divine beings that do exist are considered part of the universe and not above it. Like the divine beings (if any), the goal of all sentient beings is to experience full unity with all that is, for whatever the universe is, "you are that". This vision, unlike the God - believer dualism, has a monistic vision where there is no separation. There is no God in the confrontational sense in this vision, no heaven ruled by that God, or a permanent

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hell for disbelievers. All is one and one is all, making the religious quest one of realizing that fundamental unity fully on an instinctual level.

These two faiths are now beginning to affect the military as an institution, and yet they each stand for the two different basic forms of great religions, with very different approaches and different beliefs. Their distinctive beliefs will affect military units on an individual basis for some time, but if their numbers increase, as immigration patterns suggest, their impact will be greater in the years ahead. Looking at the interactions between each other and with a military culture is the basis of this thesis. .

## Part One: Description

### A. Traditional Islamic Beliefs

Islam is the second largest religion in the world, with about one billion followers. The message of Islam is centered on the message that the Prophet Muhammad brought to Arabia in the 7th century, emphasizing the concept of one God under whom all, including the Prophet Muhammad, are subject. Islam is a faith that is centered more on practice, as opposed to doctrine, for its understanding of what it means to be a believer. Islam could almost be called an "orthopraxy", as opposed to orthodoxy, in terms of what Islam asks of its adherents.

This emphasis on practice, as opposed to belief, can be seen in the central teachings of Islam. The "5 pillars" of Islam contain these core duties that all Muslims (or Moslems; both terms are equally acceptable) share. The first of these duties is the confession of faith, which is the only one with a creedal formula. To state, in faith, that "there is no Allah but Allah (Allah is the Arabic word for God) and Muhammad is his Prophet" makes one a Muslim. This remains true even if the individual holds a number of unusual beliefs aside from this statement, as long as these beliefs do not conflict with the basic teachings. Repeating this statement of faith is part of the practice of Islam.

The second pillar is prayer. Prayer is not an optional activity based on the believer's desires or needs, but is mandated according to set rituals at set times of the day. Also, prayer involves mandated recitations and postures, along with times of silence. A Muslim is expected to briefly pray at dawn, at noon, at mid afternoon, at sunset, and at night. Ritual washing with water, or with sand if no water is available, precedes prayer. This manner of praying is central to Islam, and it is the central act of Islamic faith. :

The third pillar consists of alms giving, or charity. Islam dictates the giving of two and one half percent, at least once a year, of one's income to charity and to the poor. This donation to the poor can be given to non - Muslims as well as to needy believers. This alms giving is seen as a religious duty and as a way to give honor to Allah. It is not interpreted as a tax in the Western

sense, but rather as a religious obligation..

The fourth pillar is a month long fast, held during the daylight hours of the Islamic lunar month of Ramadan. This 29 to 30 day long fast, which is a religious duty, means that no food or drink is permitted during daylight hours. Also, believers are expected to give up forbidden activities along with the physical fasting. There are exceptions from the fast made for pregnant women, young children, illness, and those traveling long distances. However, if a Muslim can do so, he or she should observe the fast.

The fifth pillar is the pilgrimage, or Haji, to the city of Mecca in Saudi Arabia. During the time of the pilgrimage, up to four million people may go to Mecca for the Haji. The Haji is a religious duty that every Muslim should do at least once in her or his lifetime, if they are able to make the pilgrimage. Various rituals and rites in and around the city of Mecca make up the activities of the Haji. Also, an individual who has made the pilgrimage may add the title "al-Haji", indicating that they have performed this part of the Muslim's religious duty. ,

The emphasis on the person of the Prophet Muhammad is another feature of Islam. He is (along with Jesus of Nazareth, who is considered a Prophet in Islam) a "Rasul", who, as a special prophet, supersedes in importance other recognized prophets such as Moses or Elijah. Islam sees itself as the spiritual descendant of Judaism and Christianity. This faith believes that it has the corrected and completed message of God brought to humanity in its final form via the recited message of Allah. This message from Allah, Islam teaches, was delivered through the Messenger of God, the prophet Muhammad.

However, Muhammad is not a savior figure in any way and is not the object of worship at any time. Worship and the status of divinity is reserved for Allah alone, according to Islam. Thus, it is incorrect to call followers of Islam "Mohammedians", since Muhammad is not the focus or center of faith. There is no figure in orthodox Islam similar to Jesus in Christianity. Islamic believers do, however greatly respect the Prophet Muhammad. This respect is shown in the fact that classical Islamic artists would not paint the face of Muhammad in artwork, but

rather leave the face shrouded. The modern furor over the Satanic Verses is a more modern example of this high respect and esteem for the Islamic Messenger of God. However, Islam firmly insists that Muhammad is just another human being and no more, despite all of this admiration and respect. .

The other main basis of traditional Islamic belief lies in the understanding of the Islamic scriptures. The Qur'an (sometimes spelled Koran) is the holy book of Islam, which is believed to have come from the mouth of God directly to Muhammad by revelation. The root of the word "Qur'an" means "recite" in Arabic, which means that one translation of the word Qur'an into English would be "The Recital".

Muslims believe that the Qur'an is God's word, literally given to Muhammad in the Arabic tongue for Muhammad to recite to the people. This understanding of the Qur'an in a strictly literal fashion is a basic part of Islamic faith that persists to this day. There is no liberal wing in Islam that believes in a "non-literal" Qur'an, as there is in Christianity. The implications of this belief in the Qur'an means that certain moral and ethical issues are set by the Qur'an and are therefore not open for debate.

Another feature of the Qur'an is that is not a book about the history of a people. It was, according to Muslims, revealed to Muhammad over a 23 year period, unlike the long time span that the Hebrew scriptures were assembled over. Also, the "suras" (chapters) in the Qur'an are all given a name, and placed in the book generally by length of sura. Muslims know these suras by name, and often know many suras (or the entire Qur'an) by memory. Prayer in Islam features recitation of certain Qur'an suras as a central part of prayer. The idea of recital applies not only to the nature of how the message was received for Muslims, but also a call to the believer to do the same themselves. .

Despite Islam's emphasis on practice as opposed to belief, such as in the amount of the body that a woman must cover with clothing, which varies from area to area, Islam does share many beliefs with Jews and Christians. All three faiths share a monotheistic view of God, and

they share parts of the Hebrew Bible as a common scripture. Islam recognizes this by declaring Jews and Christians to be "People of the Book", giving them a religious status above pagans and unbelievers in Islamic law. All three faiths, in their orthodox forms, also share a belief in the afterlife and in the use of prayer. Compared to Eastern religions such as Buddhism, Islam is much closer in belief and structure to Christianity and Judaism. .

Orthodox Islamic groups, aside from the American Muslim Mission, which came out of the Black Muslim movement, are numerically small and generally serving primarily Islamic ethnic groups. As a whole, however, they number about 2 million people in the U.S., and are beginning to be noticed in the military along with Black Muslim believers. These immigrant groups began to arrive in significant numbers in the U.S. during the 1950's. Earlier Muslim immigrants often joined isolated and scattered small Muslim groups that generally abandoned Islam by the second or third generation of descendants in America. The first national organization, or umbrella organization for Muslims in America began in 1952, developing out of a national conference in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. ,

This conference formed the International Muslim Society (IMS), with Abdullah Igram as its first president. The work of the IMS became part of a new umbrella group for Islamic groups in America in the following year, named the Federation of Islamic Associations of the United States and Canada (FIA). The role of this organization was to promote fellowship and communication between the isolated and scattered Islamic communities in America. Aside from this role, and its national conference that it held each year, this group did little in the way of an organized program. Its lack of any orthodox Islamic study or education program led to criticism and a call for a more orthodox Muslim presence in America. ,

In the early 1960's, the Muslim Student Association began to form out of a desire for a Muslim organization among overseas university students. The MSA grew to become a national organization, with chapters on most university campuses and a full time staff. Also, over time, the organization began to serve some of the needs of the Muslim community outside of the

universities. Out of the MSA came a number of other Islamic groups, such as the Islamic Medical Association, the American Muslim Social Scientists, and the Muslim Community Association. These groups, and other similar organizations formed the Islamic Society of North America in 1981 in order to coordinate the activities of these various Islamic organizations. The number of Muslims, aside from African Americans, is about at 2.3 million people, and their presence will be felt more on the American scene as the second and third generation take more of a leadership role in these communities. Also, the past pattern of Muslim immigrant families abandoning Islam in the second or third generation is less likely now. The reason for this change is due to increased Muslim immigration and the presence of Islamic societies in the U.S. .

## B. The Black Muslim Movement.

To understand the origins of the Black Muslim Movement in the United States is also to understand the legacy of race relations in America since the first Africans were brought to this country as slaves. Slavery began the relationship between European and African immigrants on an unequal status, with one groups legally able to own the other, but not vice versa. Also, institutional and individual racism continued that perception of unequal abilities long after political slavery ended.

There are many sources that document the treatment that African Americans received at the hands of Caucasian Americans. In the book *American Daughter*, Era Bell Thompson described her experience at growing up in the early part of the 20th century as an African American. Era remembers her treatment in school in North Dakota: "... for I knew the cousins would eventually form other coalitions and frame me. When they did they called me "black" and "nigger", and I was alone in my exile, differentiated by the color of my skin, and I longed to be home with the comfort of my family; ..." Thompson states that "I could not afford the luxury of hate" in her book, but there were and are many who can afford that "luxury".

Malcolm Little, later known as Malcolm X and as National Spokesman for the original Nation of Islam, was one of many African Americans who knew about that hate. Malcolm knew the experience of racism from his earliest days, such as when he informed his White teacher that he wanted to be a lawyer when he grew up. Replied his teacher; "Malcolm, one of life's first needs is to be realistic... A lawyer - that's no realistic goal for a nigger. You need to think about something you *can* (italics are the authors) be." Malcolm's many experiences with racism helped set the stage for his eventual conversion to the Nation of Islam and to his subsequent life. To understand the Black Muslim Movement and its origins, one must understand the atmosphere of racism and lack of opportunity that aided its development.

Black nationalism did not, however, begin with the Nation of Islam. The Moorish Science Temple, founded by the Noble Drew Ali in 1913, was an earlier organization that held

up "Moslemism" for the African American. The Moors believed that divine intervention would end white rule in America. Following that belief, they adopted an acceptance of the status quo in the meantime, until Allah would intervene. It was not primarily a political organization, and "Moorish Science" practically disappeared after the death of its founder. The Islam of Noble Drew Ali, of which some believe that Elijah Muhammed had some connection, was not orthodox Sunni Islam. However, it was a predecessor group to the Nation of Islam that preached a form of African American, or Black, nationalism along with a faith that was somewhat close to Islam if not fully orthodox Islam in its content. .

A more political organization to champion Black nationalism was the Universal Negro Improvement Association, or UNIA, which began in 1916. Also known as the Garveyites, after their founder, Marcus Garvey, the Association proposed a homeland in Africa for African Americans. The idea of a return to Africa was based on their concept that Blacks would never have an equal chance in White America. This political movement with Christian religious undertones stressed self improvement and economic advancement to further the cause of the African American's return to Africa.

Although it was at one point a large organization, after Garvey's exile from the U.S. in 1927 it faded into an insignificant organization in the US in terms of numbers. However, the UNIA did have and still has a significant impact on future African American thought. This impact, aside from being a intellectual predecessor to the Nation of Islam, can be seen in terms of its emphasis on self worth and individual dignity.

Garvey's emphasis was on the self-improvement of Blacks as people of worth and dignity, independent of any White influence or large scale White support. His was the first mass movement that was founded and run solely by African Americans, and had between 2 to 6 million members at its peak in the 1920's. Although Marcus Garvey's organization did not make a direct lasting contribution to American history, many of his ideas were adopted by the Nation of Islam, including distrust of Whites, the idea of a religion for Blacks, and separation from

Whites to the fullest extent possible. Garvey's separation was to be a return to Africa, while the Nation officially seeks a separate homeland on the North American continent. ,

The original Nation of Islam began in Detroit during the 1930's. The founder was a mysterious individual who began as a peddler in the African American community. Going under a number of different names, including Professor Ford and W.D. Fard (the word "Fard" roughly means "religious duty" in Arabic, according to the second edition of the Encyclopedia of Islam), he began to speak to the people in the African American community about what he called their home country.

W.D. Fard's comments were limited initially to comments about "the home country" and about dietary restrictions that he claimed were observed in the home country. Later on he described the religious beliefs of the home country, calling it the true religion of "the Black man". As his following grew, he began regular house meetings and eventually rented a hall in Detroit, which they called the Temple of Islam.

Fard then organized a tight hierarchical system, questioning Black people (Whites were not allowed to join) before permitting them admittance into his movement. One feature of this initiation process was that the applicant had to write a letter to Fard requesting his "original", or Islamic name, which the applicant would use from then on, no longer using his old White given "Slave" name.

The teachings of W.D. Fard emphasized understanding culture and society along racial lines. Fard stressed that the "Black Man" would someday rule over the evil and oppressive "blue-eyed devils", referring to those of Caucasian ancestry. Fard used the Bible and the Qur'an along with other literature to make his points, stressing that these works (aside from the Qur'an) were written by whites and had to be understood symbolically. Whites could not speak or write the truth, according to Fard, and therefore Blacks had to be constantly on their guard in dealing with them. .

The Nation of Islam's greatest growth and impact on American society to date came

under the leadership of one of Fard's assistants, a person originally known as Elijah Poole. Renamed Elijah Muhammad, he became Fard's favorite among his ministers. After Fard's mysterious disappearance in 1934, Elijah Muhammad assumed leadership of the group. The Honorable Elijah Muhammad, as he came to be known, declared that Fard was no other than Allah Himself, who had come to lead the Black Man out of oppression and into liberty as the new ruler over the hated Whites. This gave Fard a status in the movement not unlike Jesus in Christianity, despite the fact that orthodox Islam does not have such a figure. Also, Elijah Muhammad came to be seen as the Prophet, or Messenger, for the Nation of Islam, much in the same way as the original Muhammad was the final Prophet for Allah in orthodox Islam. ,

The key doctrines of the Nation of Islam centered on a this worldly form of asceticism. Allah was to be understood as a divine being who gave his followers blessings in this life, promising them that would become the chosen people of earth. Salvation did not exist beyond this concept of racial liberation, and to make any kind of supernatural claim to a personal afterlife was derided as "spooky", a negative term in Nation of Islam word usage. Biblical and Qur'anic references to a resurrection were to be understood in a this - worldly racial sense and not in individual terms.

Another central doctrine centered on the story of creation as understood by the Nation. According to the tenets of the Nation, the original race on earth was the Black race. Other races, according to their belief, were later created by genetic manipulation 6,000 years ago by a mad Black scientist named Yakub. This central doctrine teaches that, as the skin became lighter, the people also became more greedy and evil. Malcolm X, in referring to this doctrine, wrote that: "As they (grew) lighter and lighter they grew weaker and weaker. Their blood became weaker, their bones became weaker, their minds became weaker, their morals became weaker." White people are thus understood by the Nation to be intrinsically weaker and evil beings who cannot be truthful, as opposed to the racially superior Black Man. This doctrine explains for the Nation of Islam why the White Man enslaved them and why Allah intervened to eventually save their

race from their evil clutches. .

The Nation of Islam uses the creation myth of Yakub, which is the central myth of the Nation, to explain their claim as to why Black people are mired in misery and poverty, economically oppressed by White people. The Nation, following this myth, does have a plan for the redemption of each of its members within the racial plan of salvation.

This salvation is one of achieving true humanity as defined by the Nation, and includes a strict moral code abstaining from tobacco and alcohol. Pork products are also forbidden, deemed "filthy", and the Nation holds that pork should be food only for Whites. Members of the Nation of Islam are also expected to not overeat and to maintain a very puritanical sexual code of conduct. This sexual code includes no relationships with those of the White race, which is defined as those of Caucasian ancestry. Anyone who is not Caucasian is considered part of the Black race. Divorce is discouraged but permitted within the Nation, while the group discourages even courtship with any individual regardless of race outside of the Nations membership.

Overall racial separation to the fullest extent possible is the teaching of the Nation. This separation includes economic activity along with social contacts. The Nation expects their members to limit their contacts with Whites to the fullest extent feasible, given the current political and economic conditions. However, the Nation also expects its members to be polite and upright in their dealings with Whites as well as with all other people.

This moral code also stresses self reliance and a common racial bond that includes responsibility for fellow Blacks. This rigorous code has won a following among many former prisoners of African American descent in the prison system. The message of the Nation of Islam has found many willing ears there, and has resulted in the social redemption of many formerly hardened criminals. Its message of common struggle, acceptance of the inmate as an equal, and its support structures for aiding the former inmate after prison to lead an upright life according to the teachings of the Nation have been successful in many cases. . A brief summary of the distinctive beliefs of the Nation of Islam can be found in "The Truth", which I include in

## Appendix A.

The goals of the Nation of Islam are more shadowy and less distinct. They seek to unite the African Americans of the United States into a united front under the banner of the Nation. They call for the establishment of a separate Black nation from the territory of the present United States, and declare that this will be accomplished by Allah. At times the Nation appears to imply that all Whites will be eliminated when Allah intervenes, but Elijah Muhammad stated in 1960 that "there will be no such thing as elimination of all white people from the earth". At times the Nation teaches that the Whites will destroy each other, leaving control of America and of the planet to the Black race.

This part of the Nation's message is wrapped in mystery and secrecy, and has attracted the attention of the federal government. It is difficult to determine whether or not the Nation is proclaiming sedition.<sup>10</sup> I include in Appendix B "What the Muslims Want", which was published in every issue of Muhammad Speaks until 1975, and was published in every issue of The Final Call through 1988.

The doctrines and goals that I mention here are those that are distinct from orthodox Islam, which proclaims the unity of all under Allah, regardless of race. There is no account of Yakub in the orthodox Islamic literature, and salvation is understood as operating in a personal way after this life for believers.

Despite the heterodox beliefs of the Nation, there is nothing that I could find in orthodox sources condemning them outright as heretical. Some Orthodox Islamic sources do say that the Nation is "immature" in its Islam, and treat it with suspicion. Other orthodox Islamic sources generally accept the Nation as a "quasi-part" of Islam, or tend to avoid the question by not mentioning the Nation at all. This avoidance or at times reluctant semi-acceptance is probably due to the size of the Nation of Islam and due to the emphasis that Islam places on practice as opposed to doctrine.<sup>11</sup>

During the leadership of Elijah Muhammad, one of his ministers came to rise to national

fame. Malcolm Little (later known as Malcolm X) joined the Nation of Islam while it was still a small group in Chicago and Detroit in the late 1940's. At the time of his conversion he was serving a prison sentence for robbery.<sup>12</sup> Malcolm X later became a minister in the Nation, instrumental in the opening of new Temples (later called Mosques) of Islam in Boston and Philadelphia. In the early 1950's he became minister of the small storefront temple in New York, and oversaw its rise into a large community.<sup>13</sup> Malcolm X eventually became the National Representative for the nation of Islam, serving Elijah Muhammad on a national level as his spokesperson. Despite Malcolm's later break with the Nation and his subsequent death, his charisma, speaking skills, and organizational abilities undoubtedly aided the growth of the Nation of Islam into a nationwide movement.<sup>14</sup>

At the time of Malcolm X's death, the Nation numbered in the thousands, with Temples in most major American cities. Exact numbers are hard to come by, due to the secrecy of the movement regarding membership. This movement continued under the firm hand of Elijah Muhammad until his death on February 25, 1975. After Elijah Muhammad's death, his son, Wallace Deen Muhammad, was named head of the Nation, then an empire with assets in the range of 80 to 100 million dollars. The US Army, in Pamphlet 165-13, section III, estimated the membership of the Nation at about 150,000 people at about this time. This charismatic movement now had a new leader, which meant that the Nation was in a time of tension and possible crisis, as a new figure attempted to replace the old leader.<sup>15</sup>

What Wallace Deen Muhammad did was to transform and remake the heterodox Nation of Islam into the more orthodox American Muslim Mission. According to Imam Warithuddin Muhammad, Elijah Muhammad converted to the orthodox views of his son on his deathbed, changing his views and beliefs to those of "Al-Islam".<sup>16</sup>

Gradually, Wallace dismantled the economic infrastructure of the Nation, selling or leasing the Nation's businesses. The structure of the nation was changed, decentralizing power along with a series of name changes designed to show the changed perspective of the group. The

term Black was replaced with the term Bilalian, honoring the African muzzin of the original Prophet Muhammad. Clergy were no longer called Ministers but Imams, indicating this shift toward orthodox Islam.

This structural shift coincided with a shift in theology and focus. The racial focus of the old Nation was removed, with the pronouncements of Elijah Muhammad now understood symbolically as opposed to literally. The term "White Devil", for example, was now understood to mean an attitude or evil perspective on life that any person, regardless of skin color, could have. Therefore, a Caucasian may or may not be a "White Devil", based on their internal mental attitude. This change led to the opening up of membership to Whites.

The new leadership also removed the emphasis on Black nationalism and the call for a separate homeland, which was always a part of the old Nation's message. A new emphasis came with a call for a new social order in America, based on the teachings of Islam. The goals of the group now centered on a more traditional Islam out of the Sunni tradition, including a personal belief in an afterlife. The American Muslim Mission effectively replaced the central creation myth of Yakub with an orthodox understanding of the Qur'an as the core focus of its doctrine and understanding. Another feature of this shift in emphasis was an increased sense of cooperation with other religious and political groups.

Economic lines also show these interesting changes that transformed the old Nation of Islam into the American Muslim Mission. Lawrence Mamiya, in his study of the Black Muslim Movement, found that the members of the Mission are mainly middle class economically. Current members of the Nation of Islam, on the other hand, are generally from lower economic groups. Socioeconomic changes in the rising prosperity of the group, according to Mamiya, aided in the change from the confrontative Nation to the more cooperative Mission.

Max Weber's methodology of looking at class difference and economics in terms of religious affiliation is helpful here. It appears that the Nation's economic success led to its being more open to a change in its beliefs and orientation toward the larger society. The change in the

approach of the Mission, as well as the re-birth of the Nation under Louis Farrakhan, appealed to different economic classes in the African American community of modern America. While Farrakhan's new Nation appeals to those in the urban ghetto as before, the appeal of the Mission is more broadly spread and more oriented toward the middle class. .

The American Muslim Mission is a far more mainstream religious group with less stringent requirements for membership and a more accommodating approach to American culture. This shift in approach has won the Mission a measure of acceptance by political and religious leaders in the United States. Symbolic of this transformation was when Imam Wallace spoke, by invitation, to the American military in the Pentagon on February 5, 1992. . Imam Wallace is now the individual who certifies people as Islamic for the Hajj in North America, as a representative of the Saudi government. The Saudi awarding of this responsibility means that Imam Wallace is a fully accepted brother in the family of Islam. However, this acceptance does not mean that there is now a seamless unity between the Mission and traditional orthodox Islam. There are cultural differences between the two that persist, although they are far fewer than those issues that divide orthodox Sunni Islam from the current Nation of Islam. .

As alluded above, the message of the old Nation does continue today in a literal and not only in a symbolic form. Louis Farrakhan, who served as Minister of the New York Temple after Malcolm X, stayed with the old Nation and its successor bodies until 1977. Farrakhan then left the organization to rebuild the old Nation of Islam, complete with its heterodox beliefs and confrontational approach to the larger culture. According to Farrakhan, Elijah Muhammad told him that the "Nation was going to take a dive", but that it would be later be rebuilt.

All of the old doctrines were reinstated in the form in which they were understood before, and the appeal to the Nation to the poorer urban African American remains strong. Farrakhan has made some innovations, such as admitting women as ministers in the Nation. Another change is in the participation of the Nation in American political life after Jesse Jackson's try for the Presidency in 1983. Farrakhan also established mosques on the African continent, and has a

reputation as a leader in mediating conflicts between inner city gangs.

In summary, Farrakhan has been remarkably successful in rebuilding the Nation, and the group has grown to at least a minimum of 70,000 to 100,000 members today.<sup>21</sup> In terms of numbers, some scholars estimate that about 1 million African Americans have at one time or another been part of an Islamic group as of 1990. While the American Muslim Mission has not grown rapidly like the re-born Nation of Islam, it is still the largest orthodox Muslim group in America.<sup>22</sup>

It is interesting to note that there is little overt friction between the new Nation of Islam and the American Muslim Mission, despite their conflicting stories regarding the support of Elijah Muhammad. In 1990 a "Continental Muslim Council" accepted Farrakhan, despite his distinct beliefs, as Islamic (but not as a member of the ISNA), largely on the overt support of Imam Wallace and the Mission. There is also little evidence of any large scale defections from one group to the other, aside from those who left with Elijah Muhammad's death and those like Farrakhan in the leadership of the old Nation who left the movement.

Farrakhan's growth has come largely from new members, as well as from those who fell away from the group after Elijah Muhammad's death. Perhaps it is the socioeconomic differences between the two groups that aid in this relative lack of overt friction.<sup>23</sup> The Muslim Journal, the official newspaper for the American Muslim Mission, does not attack Farrakhan in its pages (or mention him at all in the editions that I read), but rather proposes a political agenda supportive of Jackson's Rainbow Coalition. Any criticism of Farrakhan or the Nation is more indirect, by means of omission, than direct. The pages of this publication also include evangelistic tracts, articles documenting Imam Muhammad's activities, quotes from the Qur'an, and news about American Muslim Mission events and campaigns.<sup>24</sup>

This lack of open conflict is also interesting in light of some sources that claim that there were in fact large scale defections to the Nation from the American Muslim Mission. In regards to this issue, there is a conflict between the available sources, regarding the number of people

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that left the Mission to join the reborn Nation of Islam. Verifying the actual number of people who transferred their allegiance from one group to the other is practically impossible. The reason for this difficulty is due to the fact that the actual practicing membership figures of both the Nation and the Mission are not available. In any event, there is still a surprising lack of open conflict between the two groups, given their history. »

### C. Traditional Buddhist Beliefs.

Back in 1986, I had an incident with a Buddhist soldier that indicates why I include this religious group in my study. The soldier, a private in the battalion that I served in at the time, came to me, as the battalion chaplain, for help. He told me that he lived in the unit's barracks, and stated that he wanted to pray at dawn and at dusk in the prescribed manner for his Buddhist sect. I asked him why he could not pray in his room, not realizing the soldier's problem. He replied that his religious group used incense with prayer at a personal shrine, and that the unit commander had forbidden the use of incense for any reason in the barracks. The reason that the commander initially gave me was that the use of incense would hide the smell of marijuana smoke and hinder his anti-drug program.

Although the soldier was eventually able to pray in his barracks room using incense, this incident highlights the need to examine the Buddhist faith, as practiced in America, in light of the cultural setting and traditions of the American Army. Buddhism is a very different faith from those religious traditions commonly known in the West. It is a faith that allows its believers to have other religious beliefs at the same time, and does not require the existence of God for faith. Buddhism comes out of the Hindu religious tradition, and it is founded on a very different religious basis than the faiths of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. ,

This basis that Buddhism shares with Hinduism can be explained in terms of the basic orientation of the believer toward the universe. In Western faiths, including Islam, the relationship is between the believer and God. As Martin Buber put it, it is an "I - Thou" relationship where God is outside of the believer and separate from the believer. The Hindu and Buddhist contention is that there is essentially no dualism or "I - Thou" in the universe. Since there is no dualism, the individual is the universe and the universe is the individual.

This is a radically monistic view that maintains that whatever there is in the universe, "you are that". This means that the earth, the heavens, the chair you sit on, and an insect in Nepal all share the same basic unity. There is nothing that you are not, along with everything

else and everyone else.

Thus, the goal in life is not to serve or honor a divine being called God or Allah, but rather to free yourself from the illusion of duality, of being separate from other things in the universe. Maintaining the illusion of duality means suffering, in the form of rebirth or in the continuation of the consequences of your existence in a continuing and ongoing cycle. Hindus differ on this point from Buddhists, but both groups share the concept of continuing beyond this life in some cyclical fashion.

Achieving the goal of removing your illusions on the initiative level, in your entire being, leads the believer toward the goal of Nirvana, which means "blowing out". Nirvana is spiritually "re-merging" with the essence of the universe (the real you) in one sense. However, the exact nature of Nirvana is practically impossible to explain and is the subject of debate in Buddhist circles. It is unknowable and unexplainable on one level, yet it can also be intuitively understood and claimed at the same time. Explaining the doctrine of Nirvana is roughly analogous to explaining the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, where it is understood and yet is at the same time unexplainable. ,

This different basis of belief can be seen in a brief Buddhist story, which goes roughly as follows: If you were to see the Buddha coming toward you on the road, what should you do? The correct answer is to kill him, since to see the Buddha means that there is an illusion of duality between your own Buddha nature and your perceptions. All is one, and the individual Buddhist believes that there is no separation. Seeing the separation means that you are seeing an illusion, a "false Buddha" ,

The basic tenets of Buddhism flow from the teachings of Gautama Siddhartha, who lived about the 5th century BC. Born into a minor ruling family in northern India during a period of religious as well as political unrest, young Gautama lived a sheltered life as a child. The traditional story is that he did not discover suffering, old age, illness, and death until he was a young man. Deeply shocked by his discovery, Gautama renounced his titles along with his wife

and child. Leaving the royal court at night alone, he left behind his past life, exchanging it for the life of a wandering ascetic. ,

In his travels as an ascetic, eventually becoming part of a wandering community of ascetics generally called "srmanas", he tried extreme self denial as the way to discover the path out of suffering. Gautama's goal was to find the path to liberation from suffering and samsara, which is the name for the cycle of continual suffering through life after life. Eastern religious faiths that hold to samsara believe that this cycle of continual death and re-birth is negative in that it continues suffering. Gautama's goal was to find the secret to liberation from samsara by the means of self denial. ,

After he found that this approach did not bring the enlightenment he sought, Gautama found that he was just as confused hungry as he was well fed back at the palace. He then ate something and sat down by a Bodhi tree, determined not to leave that place until he achieved enlightenment. During the night, according to traditional accounts, he experienced many illusions created by Mara, the god of trickery. Toward dawn, he achieved enlightenment and became the Buddha, or "Enlightened One". This began a 45 year period of teaching and gathering of others interested in enlightenment that began the Buddhist faith. ,

What the Buddha taught is a religious faith that is different from Western faiths, including Islam. The core of this faith can be found in the Four Noble Truths, which the Buddha taught to his first disciples in his first sermon to them. These Four Noble Truths are: Dukkha (The Noble Truth of Suffering), Samudaya (The Noble Truth of Craving or Desire), Nirodha (The Noble Truth of the Cessation of Dukkha), and Magga (The Noble Truth of the Way leading to the Cessation of Dukkha). ,

The logic of the Buddhist perspective begins with the First Noble Truth regarding suffering. The concept is that people are trapped in an existence dominated by impermanence, emptiness, and imperfection. Happiness exists in the world, but it is not permanent in this ever changing world. Loss and suffering are the eventual result of any life, and the cycle repeats itself

over and over in Buddhist teaching. Realizing and accepting that life has this continual and loss filled nature is to understand the beginning point for Buddhism. ,

The second Noble Truth builds upon the premise of the first. It states that the cause of suffering or impermanence in ones own life is due to craving. To have desires, to thirst after someone or something is to cling to samsara and continue the wheel of life over and over again in Buddhist teaching. Any attachment to anything, including the self, leads to continuing the cycle. This means, for the Buddhist, that the key to ones liberation from samsara comes from within. The Buddha illustrated this in his reputed last words, which were: "Work out your own salvation". Each individual is the absolute master of their own fate according to Buddhism, and even divine beings are trapped in desires along with humanity and the rest of creation. ,

The Third Noble Truth declares that there is a way to liberation from the desire caused by the endless cycle of suffering and imperfection. If one eliminates all desires and cravings fully, taught the Buddha, one can then attain Nirvana, which comes with the cessation of all desire.

There is much debate over what Nirvana, the ultimate goal for all sentient beings according to Buddhism, actually is. It involves the cessation of all illusion, including the illusion of the self, since there is a oneness in Buddhism to everything in the universe. Nirvana is considered to be absolute truth, shorn of all illusions, and one enters it at the end of the life in which the individual has realized Nirvana. Self categories disappear in Nirvana, but what that state actually is for the Buddha (or anyone who has achieved Nirvana) is beyond language and comprehension for those trapped in samsara. ,

The Fourth Noble Truth proclaims the path, or Middle Way between asceticism and self-indulgence, that leads to Nirvana. This path consists of the Eight-fold Path, consisting of Right Views, Right Intention, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Concentration. By seeking to live and attain these eight right behaviors, one heads down the path to enlightenment, with the mental right paths of mindfulness and concentration coming after the others. Followers of Buddhism use Meditation and self reflection

techniques to gain wisdom and insight in following this Way.

One other doctrine that is distinctly Buddhist is the doctrine that there is no such a thing as the self. There is no soul or permanent existence, Buddhism teaches, beyond the illusion of separate existence found in samsara. Thus, for the Buddhist there is ultimately no "I", and striving for self is only another part of the same samsaric illusion. In terms of the cycle of rebirth, it is the consequences of ones previous existence that carries over, and not any eternal self.

This idea of no-self, or "Anatman", can be compared to the ripples created in a still pond when you throw a rock into the pond. The ripples extend outward, but the water itself acts as a carrier for the force of the energy to other water further away from the impact of the stone. The water at the center of the ripple itself does not travel outward, just as the Buddhist maintains that there is no traveling of a soul from existence to existence. The monistic core of Buddhism must always be kept in mind when looking at this faith, and this excludes any concept of self as separate from the unity of all things. Grasping the Dharma, or the eternal truth about all things, replaces the self as the goal of existence.

Practically speaking, Buddhism as an institution relies heavily on the Sangha, which is the monastic community in Buddhism. Buddhist institutions tend to survive when the Sangha is functioning, and wither when the Sangha is absent or corrupt. This reliance by all Buddhist groups upon the Sangha in some form is a constant in Buddhism, despite wide differences in doctrine. It is a communal monastic body that has an ongoing influence on the lives of Buddhist believers.

In summary, the Buddhist faith could be called a philosophy as opposed to a religion in the strictest sense, since it does not require the existence of a divine being. This is true despite the evidence that the Buddha did accept the concept of divine beings. Despite this, however, there are some forms of Buddhism that do have savior figures, called Bodhisattvas. Bodhisattvas are beings who have delayed their entry into Nirvana for the sake of helping all other sentient beings toward enlightenment. These beings do not attain Nirvana for the follower, but ease the

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path that the individual must take. Any "saving" acts of the Bodhisattva are not the final goal but can only be another step toward the eventual goal of Nirvana. Even the "Pure Land" sects, which emphasize faith in the Buddha Amida and his paradise for the next life, see that "heaven" as only a step toward the goal of Nirvana.

Most of the Buddhist movements in America come out of this Mahayana Buddhist tradition that believes in bodhisattvas. The worship of the divine, although not seen as the final goal, make these Mahayana Buddhist faiths more understandable to Western observers. Even with this affinity, though, there is much about Buddhism that is alien to Western modes of thought. <sup>14</sup>

#### D. The Buddhist Church in America (BCA).

The Buddhist Church in America, or BCA for short, is the American expression of the Nishi Hongwangji sect (meaning "West School of the Original Vow of Amida Buddha"), which comprises between 75 and 90 percent of the Japanese Buddhists in America as of 1977. Nishi Hongwangji is a sect of Jodo Shinshu, which in turn is part of the Pure Land school of Buddhism. Jodo Shinshu is the dominant Buddhist school in Japan numerically and Japanese immigration to the U.S. reflects this fact.

The Pure land school teaches, broadly speaking, to have faith in the Amida Buddha (not Gautama Siddhartha but another Buddha), and to show that faith though "recital" of the Nembutsu, which is "Namu Amida Butsu", or "Homage to the Amida Buddha". Reliance on Amida Buddha's powers and merit gains the believer re-birth into his paradise, called the Pure Land, which, according to BCA belief, will greatly aid the Buddhist toward attaining Nirvana. The BCA shares with Nishi Hongwangji the belief that physically saying the Nembutsu is not necessary for this salvation. Instead, the BCA advocates seeking a sincere reaction to faith in Amida Buddha that is instinctive and natural.

The BCA traces its origins to Japanese immigration to the United States during the later part of the 19th Century. In 1870, according to Census Bureau data, there were only 55 people of Japanese ancestry in the United States. This number grew to 111,101 by 1920, indicating the vast growth in the number of Japanese people immigrating to the U.S. With this wave of immigration, Buddhism entered America, since the BCA is the oldest Buddhist group in America, due to its ethnic origins. Missionary efforts by Buddhist groups in America began in earnest with the temporary visit of a pair of Jodo Shinshu missionaries to the San Francisco area in 1898. This visit was instrumental in forming the YMBA (Young Men's Buddhist Association) in San Francisco. .

In 1899, the first two Jodo Shinshu missionaries sent for missionary work to America arrived in San Francisco, and Buddhist services began in September of that year. This activity

resulted in the birth of the NABM (North American Buddhist Mission), which was the predecessor body to the BCA. During this time, up to the restrictions placed on immigration to America in 1924, Japanese immigration continued and the new religious group on the American scene grew. ,

In 1907, A "Gentlemen's Agreement" between the United States and Japan limited immigration to non-laborers wising to immigrate from Japan. This led to the "Picture-Bride" era, when Japanese American men found their brides via family arrangements in Japan, which was the traditional Japanese practice. The effect of the Gentlemen's Agreement was to restrict but not stop immigration to America. This agreement did, however, slow the growth rate for the NABM. Buddhist life in the NABM at this time centered on the local temple, wherever a temple existed. This temple, in a city like San Francisco, served as a Japanese cultural center, and was until recently one of the few places that served the needs of the whole Japanese American community in any given location. .

The immigration restrictions under the Gentlemen's Agreement, as the years passed, also witnessed a rising in racist attitudes toward Japanese Americans. It became difficult for Japanese groups to build temples (or for Japanese Christian groups to build churches) in West Coast communities, and local communities enacted laws discriminating against Japanese Americans. With the passage of the Oriental Exclusion Law in 1924, the dwindling tide of Japanese immigration practically ceased. Ironically, the initial effect on the NABM was to increase membership and Buddhist activity among the Japanese Americans already living in America. Temple membership and involvement rose in part due to Japanese - American reaction to the discrimination, particularly among second generation Americans of Japanese descent who were angered by these discriminatory policies.

The other reason for the rise in the strength of the NABM was due to the fact that the original first generation Japanese Americans were getting older, due to the lack of new immigrants. This group apparently became more interested in putting their affairs in order, and

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were then more reliant on the community support that the local Buddhist temple afforded. This reliance continued as the 1920's gave way to the 1930's and 1940's, as the Japanese community continued to put roots down in their adopted country, mainly in the West Coast. .

World War Two was in many ways catastrophic to the NABM, along with the Japanese American community in the United States. With the coming of war, the NABM, along with other Japanese organizations, strongly affirmed their loyalty to the American government. They became involved in supporting the war movement in actions and in contributions, as did many other volunteer organizations during this time. Despite these efforts, the American government organized the deportment of Japanese Americans into detainment camps in 1942.

The effect of the war upon the NABM was dramatic, for it accelerated many changes that were slowly taking place in the organization. English speaking priests and Buddhist leaders assumed new importance and authority, for they could effectively deal with the English speaking internment camp authorities on Buddhist issues. The government did not intern the few Caucasian members of the NABM, and these individuals assumed roles as leaders in maintaining and holding on to NABM temples and property.

Internment also led to greater cooperation between the NABM and other, newer Buddhist groups to America that came with the earlier Japanese immigration. Joint Buddhist services were held in some of the camps, and Buddhists in the camps founded a lay movement open to a member of any Buddhist group. Also, the war years saw the revitalization of the YBM youth movement. The YBM sought to keep second generation Japanese Americans in the Buddhist faith. This was due to the loss of many from this generation at a time when it many believed it was "un-American" to be Buddhist. .

In 1943, the government permitted some Japanese Americans to leave the interment camps, provided that they relocate to a Mid-Western or Eastern city. This decision led to the beginning of Japanese American communities in other parts of the country. Buddhist activity and temples soon followed these former detainees into these new areas for the NABM.

Starting in February of 1944, a series of meetings laid the groundwork for the formation of the Buddhist Churches of America. The former leadership of the NABM gave approval to this change to an independent church status, as opposed to a mission status, and the second generation Japanese American leaders in the YBM concurred in July of that year. Also, another meeting in July ratified the new BCA organization. A more democratic structure and the use of English as the dominant language were key changes from the old NABM. The BCA still has ties to the Hompa Hongwanji leadership in Japan, but the relationship is now on more of a partnership basis between the two groups. ,

Following the war and the return to normal life outside of the internment camps, rebuilding the BCA temples became secondary to the membership rebuilding their lives. Only later, in the 1950's were large scale improvements begun to temples and increases made to ministerial salaries. The struggle between first and second generation Japanese Americans continued, with the second generation gaining more power in the organization as time passed. Despite some Caucasian converts, the BCA remained an essentially Japanese organization through the mid 1960's. ,

The period after 1965, with the founding of the Institute of Buddhist Studies at Berkley, was one of change for the BCA. This institute has led to the BCA's ability to train their clergy in an American setting, with little input from Japan. The BCA is now more vocal than it was in the past, entering into the social arena on political matters and in social action programs. Its future is tied to its ability to reach the third generation Japanese Americans as well as its ability to become a less ethnically oriented organization. ,

#### E. Zen Buddhism in America.

"Subhuti was Buddha's disciple. He was able to understand the potency of emptiness, the viewpoint that nothing exists except in its relationship of subjectivity and objectivity. One day Subhuti, in a mood of sublime emptiness, was sitting under a tree. Flowers began to fall about him. "We are praising you for your discourse on emptiness," the gods whispered to him. "But I have not spoken of emptiness," said Subhuti. "You have not spoken of emptiness, we have not heard emptiness," responded the gods. "This is the true emptiness." And blossoms showered upon Subhuti as rain." ,

The story above is from the Buddhist tradition of Zen, (or Ch'an in China) which seeks the path to enlightenment not in prayer and devotion to a savior Buddha or Bodhisattva, but rather through meditation and instruction. In a structural sense, Zen is a part of Buddhism, in that it shares ideas and concepts that are common to Buddhism, such as the goal of Nirvana. It is also part of the same Mahayana Buddhist tradition as the BCA and the other Buddhist groups examined in this thesis.

Zen also denies any necessity for God, soul, salvation along with denying any need for vows, scriptures or any kind of ritual. Zen, although it claims a line of teachers from the Tathagatha, the original Gautama Siddhartha who became the Buddha, can be seen as a blend of a form of Indian Buddhism with Chinese Taoist ideals. ,

But to dissect Zen in this fashion is to destroy its spirit and to misunderstand its goals altogether. Zen is a form of Buddhism that resists any attempt to categorize, to divide, to separate any part of the universal whole from any other. This is in accord with the monistic basis for all Buddhist belief. Not speaking about emptiness but rather feeling emptiness in mind and body, instinctively knowing emptiness, "is the true emptiness".

Zen is not part of any system of classification or of structure. Rather, Zen can be understood as sitting outside of any structural system, neither liking nor disliking them. Thomas Merton puts it this way in his book *Zen and the Birds of Appetite*: "And in Zen enlightenment,

the discovery... is the discovery not that one *sees* Buddha but that one *is* Buddha and that Buddha is not what the images in the temple had led one to expect: for there is no longer any image, and consequently nothing to see, one to see it, and a Void in which no image is even conceivable. "The True seeing", said Shen Hui, "is when there is no seeing."

This is to say that the heart and soul of Zen is not found in sitting motionless for an hour in meditation, nor is it found in any of the external trappings of Zen. Zen simply is for the believer, and the external sights and sounds of Zen are only means toward the goal of inner enlightenment, toward seeing and no seeing. ,

In this search for intuitive unity and to truly know (as opposed to knowing about) that is Zen, there are two schools of thought. Both schools use meditation techniques to seek enlightenment, and differ mainly in the way in which enlightenment is achieved. The Soto school of Zen believes that enlightenment is a gradual process, generally achieved after much study and meditation. The Rinzai school believes that enlightenment comes all at once, in a flash of insight. However, the Rinzai school also holds that this flash of enlightenment does not come without effort on the part of the practitioner. Zen masters use "koans", which are riddles that reason alone cannot solve, along with meditation to guide the individual to a point where they are ready and able to receive that flash of enlightenment. In Zen, "satori" is the word that denotes this flash of attaining enlightenment. ,

Zen in America, as elsewhere, consists of individual masters of Zen and their groups of disciples, with little formal organization between groups. Zen is like many other forms of Buddhism in its reliance on a retreat or monastic setting. This means that, in order to study the history of Zen in this country, it is best to look at these individual masters and their schools of thought.

The Rinzai school came to America came to America in 1893, when the Rinzai master Soyen Shaku attended the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago. His visit began interest in this school of Zen in America, and a few individuals visited him in Japan to learn about Zen.

After a number of Zen adherents made visits to the U.S.A., in 1928 Shigetsu Sasaki stayed behind after a visit of five Zen teachers. Interest in Zen increased, and other leaders came to meet and develop this interest. A Rinzai school called the First Zen Institute of America began in 1931. This institute consists of an ethnically European group that still exists, based in New York. Other Zen groups began in the West Coast during this same time period. ,

With the 1960's , an expansion in interest in Zen developed. New centers for Zen, along with retreat centers, opened in the West Coast at this time. Interest in Zen came from Americans of African and European ancestry, raising the question of how to best teach Zen to Westeners. The debate on this issue centered on the best use of koans for Westeners. While the koans used at these newer centers are generally Chinese in origin, some masters are using new koans based on Western concepts for their American students. These school did expand in size and in the number of adherents over the succeeding years, but not at the rate of the 1960's. ,

The Soto school of Zen began in America in the 1950's. Shunyu Suzuki, who lived in Japan for many years, came to the Zen Temple in San Francisco in 1958. Like Rinzai Zen, Soto Zen grew rapidly in the 1960's and continues to grow at a slower rate today. This movement is located primarily in the West Coast, and has Caucasian Zen masters as well as Oriental masters. ,

Another school, blending aspects of Rinzai and Soto Zen, also appeared in America. This school began in America in the 1950's, under the efforts of Hakuun Yasutani, Philip Kapleau, and Taizan Maezumi. Zen master Kapleau in particular has tried to "Americanize" Zen for American students, including chanting in English and other changes to make Zen more accessible for Westeners. However, some other masters in this "blended" school rely on more traditional methods. ,

The 1960's, as alluded above, was a period of rapid growth for Zen and all of its schools in America. Many people in the "counter-culture" of that decade turned to Zen as they rejected much of the West's spiritual teachings. It was during this time that many in America first heard about Zen and about Zen meditation on a popular level. This popular interest led to a practice of

Zen in the "hippie" movement. This "Beat Zen" continued during the decade, despite the fact that some Zen masters derided it, calling it undisciplined and lacking in focus. However, some serious followers of Zen did come out of this movement, and it did make a contribution to Zen in America. ,

Zen in America has a number of different approaches and expressions, and Zen appears open to Western influences. Feminist philosophies of Zen are emerging, stressing the lack of a male father figure deity in Zen. This feminist critique criticizes the tactics of male domination allegedly practiced by some Zen masters, including the sexual abuse of power. Buddhist feminists are calling for more female Zen teachers of Zen in America. Also, they call for an end to any "blind" following of any Zen master or adherence to any hierarchical power structure. Instead, these female Buddhists advocate that each individual adherent must trust ones own experience in choosing a Zen teacher. ,

Socially activist perspectives also are part of Zen in America, opposing sexism and homophobia. These approaches are somewhat controversial in Zen, and are far more activist than many other Buddhist movements in this country. This socially involved, activist Buddhism is different from the image of detached serenity one thinks of when looking at Zen. Yet it is a part of Zen in this country, as it adapts to its new home here in the West. Although Zen is not growing as it did in the 1960's, and it still has an Oriental ethnic makeup for the large part, it is and will probably remain part of the religious landscape of America. ,

#### F. Soka Gakkai International - USA

"If you desire to attain Buddhahood immediately, lay down the banner of pride, cast away the club of resentment, and trust yourselves to the unique Truth. Fame and profit are nothing more than vanity of this life. . . Devote yourself wholeheartedly to the "Adoration to the Lotus of the Perfect Truth", and utter it yourself as well as admonish others to do the same. Such is your task in this human life". These words come the pen of Nichiren (1222-1282), the founder of a Buddhist religious reform movement in Japan. .

Nichiren was an uncompromising advocate for religious as well as social reform in Japan who based his reforms upon the Lotus Sutra of Buddhism. Unlike the dominant "Pure land" groups who adhered to the Buddha Amida (above any sutras), Nichiren called for elevating the Lotus Sutra to the central place as the heart of all Buddhist teaching. Beginning as a street evangelist, and despite persecution by the authorities, Nichiren succeeded in founding this movement in Buddhism that exists to this day in Japan. .

The beliefs of the Nichiren Shoshu (one of the Nichiren sects) group center on this belief that the Lotus Sutra is the core of true Buddhism. Recitation of the name of the Lotus Sutra is mandatory and they teach that this action will gain the believer both spiritual and temporal benefits. The Gohonzon, a slab of wood or a scroll on which the name of the Lotus Sutra is inscribed, serves as a visual focal point for individual as well as communal worship. Chanting "Hail to the Lotus Sutra of the Mystical Law" (Namu myoho renge kyo) in Japanese is a central aspect of both personal and corporate worship. Faith in the Gohonzon and in chanting, Nichiren teaches, will make positive changes in the life of the Nichiren adherent.

Nichiren believers, stressing the unity of all things that is at the core of Buddhism, believe that individual happiness and prosperity are intimately connected with the well being of groups and of nations. Thus, this group also believes that political and social blessings will result if a sufficient number of people from any given nation convert to Nichiren beliefs and chant the name of the Lotus Sutra. This concept helps explain why the Nichiren Shoshu are very

evangelically minded and activist in seeking new converts. ,

The Nichiren Shoshu (The True Sect of Nichiren) is a Japanese based sect that until recently included a large lay movement called Soka Gakkai. Prior to 1991 the lay controlled Soka Gakkai organization functioned as the evangelistic arm of Nichiren Shoshu around the world. The American wing of Soka Gakkai was known as Nichiren Shoshu of America.

The Soka Gakkai in Japan are known for their very aggressive evangelism campaigns, including tactics such as banging drums outside a prospective family's home until a member of the family agreed to convert to Nichiren. In America, the group uses less aggressive techniques, believing these to be more appropriate to a Western setting.

Due to the formal split between the Nichiren Shoshu and the Soka Gakkai in 1991, the Soka Gakkai in America (formerly Nichiren Shoshu Academy) are now known as "Soka Gakkai International - U.S.A.". For the purposes of this paper, I will consistently refer to the American lay group as Soka Gakkai, referring to the parent Japanese organization separately. Many resources on this group were written prior to this organizational split, which means that some of the sources referenced here are somewhat outdated. However, they are still useful, since the two groups histories are basically similar prior to 1991. ,

The Soka Gakkai organization began in America in 1960, when President Ikeda of the parent Soka Gakkai organization in Japan began chapters along the West Coast, primarily among Japanese Americans. The group grew rapidly, in part due to the aggressive evangelism techniques used by the group, and in 1967 they began "shakubuku" (evangelism) drives among non-Orientals. Growth among non-Oriental groups was successful, with 95% of the new membership between 1967 and 1976 coming from African and European ethnic groups. By 1974, 258 chapters of Soka Gakkai existed in every state in America, out of the original 10 that Ikeda founded in 1960. , According to U.S. Army sources, the Soka Gakkai number about 35,000 families as of 1980. ,

In 1976, the Soka Gakkai in America started what they called Phase II, which shifted the

evangelistic emphasis from recruitment to member retention and the spiritual growth of members. A "low-key" approach toward evangelism replaced the high intensity shakubuku campaigns as a part of this shift in strategy. Membership gains during this phase did level off, as the organization sought to retain its large number of new converts. .

The Soka Gakkai, unlike their parent organization in Japan, adopted a non-political stance in regard to partisan politics in America, and did not form a political party as the group did in Japan. However, with this political orientation also came a very patriotic perspective, in which the Soka Gakkai decided to support the aims and goals of the American democracy. The 1976 bicentennial celebration of American independence that the Soka Gakkai staged, complete with George Washington chanting in Japanese, illustrates this strong support of the status quo in terms of political system. .

Increasing tensions in Japan between the Nichiren Shoshu priesthood and the lay led Soka Gakkai movement in Japan led to a formal severing of ties between the two on 1991. This separation also occurred in America between the two groups. In America, the Soka Gakkai are far more numerous than the supporters of the few Nichiren Shoshu temples in this country.

The result of this split is that there is now a large Soka Gakkai organization with very few priests. Also, there is a Nichiren priesthood with few followers in America, with that priesthood acting very suspicious of outsiders, perhaps fearing Soka Gakkai influence. The problems for the Soka Gakkai lay mainly in the lack of access to priestly rites and ceremonies, although six priests did leave the Nichiren Shoshu and join the Soka Gakkai in this country at the time of the split. Since the Gohonzon is supposed to be given to the new believer by a priest as part of the ceremony, this part of recruitment will be problematical for some time. Only time will determine how this group adapts to an existence apart from the priesthood of Nichiren Shoshu. .

Recent information indicates that the split will be long lasting, if not permanent. Critics of the Soka Gakkai, mainly laity connected with the Nichiren Shoshu group in America, claim widespread corruption and dissatisfaction among the Soka Gakkai. These claims include a 96%

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membership loss in the Chicago area and massive skimming of funds for personal use by Soka Gakkai leaders.

These claims are strongly denied by the Soka Gakkai leadership, who view these claims as signs of desperation among the Nichiren Shoshu in America. Also, one recent researcher attempting to obtain official information from the Nichiren Shoshu in America was repeatedly denied interviews or even permission to visit a Nichiren temple. The researcher, Daniel Metraux, believes that the Nichiren Shoshu are very fearful of Soka Gakkai influence and have become difficult to approach as a result.

The Soka Gakkai responded to this organizational split by stepping up their recruitment campaigns. By this change they are moving back to their older, more activist style of evangelism in America. In any event, these incidents indicate the depth of feeling between these two groups and the likelihood that this split will be permanent. Also, how this will affect the growth of the Soka Gakkai in including African and Western ethnic groups, which they have done successfully thus far, remains to be seen. <sup>10</sup>

#### G. Tibetan Buddhism in America.

"Get the essence", said the Dalai Lama to a group of questioners in America, referring to what Buddhism truly teaches. "Practices can change... seek to keep the essence of the religion". This advice came from the spiritual and former temporal ruler of Tibet, who is the spiritual leader of the Tibetan form of Buddhism.

This Tibetan form of Buddhism arose out of a synthesis between the Vajrayana tradition of Buddhism with the native Tibetan religion, called Bon. Buddhism came to Tibet during the 8th century AD, with missionary activity into Tibet from Northern India. The most famous of these missionaries was named Padmasambhava, who incorporated local Bon deities into the Buddhist faith as "Protectors of Buddhism", often after a contest in magic against the local deity. Despite a suppression of Buddhism in Tibet in the 9th century, Buddhist faith continued and began to re-emerge during the 9th and 10th centuries. ,

This growth of Buddhist faith continued, and the current line of Dalai Lamas began in 1438 as spiritual leaders of a Tibetan Buddhist sect. During the leadership of the fifth Dalai Lama, with the aid of converted Mongol troops, he became the political leader of Tibet. This theocratic rule continued until the Communist Chinese invasion of 1950 and the following self imposed exile of the Dalai Lama in 1959. ,

Lamaitism, another name for this type of Buddhism, centered on monastery life in Tibet, organized under Lamas, or teachers. Due to the fusion of religion and politics in Tibet prior to 1950, monasteries had considerable privileges and functioned as cultural and educational centers along with their religious functions. Lamaitism developed as a complex and many faceted faith, with types of meditation and contemplation basically reserved for the spiritually educated. Other kinds of prayer and devotion were more popular and found among the general populace. This diversity led to wide variety in practices and kinds of worship.

Nobility and the educated clergy practiced a faith based on meditation that did not rule out ritual and ceremony. These rituals and ceremonies were designed to help achieve

enlightenment, using elaborate and intricate postures and sounds to aid the mediator in the search for this initiative knowledge. Popular Lamaism had more connection with the Bon religion, and brought the Bon deities into the Buddhist pantheon. This aspect of Lamaism stressed the spiritual dimension in everything, with many prayers to deities for help and protection. Unlike the meditations of the leadership class, popular Tibetan Buddhism is concrete, here and now oriented, and interested in immediate practical concerns. ,

Another distinctive feature of Tibetan Buddhism is its concept of incarnate lamas, called "Tulkus", with the Dali Lama being the most important of these Tulkus. This incarnation is not that of God, but rather that of a Buddha/Bodhisattva who returns, life after life, delaying his or her own entry into Nirvana for the sake of others. The Dali lama is believed to be the incarnation of one of these Tulkus, a Buddha of compassion called Avalokitesvara.

After the death of an incarnate lama, a search begins for the successor, whom the searchers identify by means of the previous lamas possessions. When a child, born after the death of the previous lama, can correctly identify the possessions of the previous lama from other items, along with other tests, that child becomes the next lama. The child then becomes the next in that line of succession for that Buddha incarnation, and the mass of believers in popular Lamaism will revere that individual. ,

However, despite these differences based on approach, all Tibetan Buddhists strove to accumulate merit and to seek enlightenment, doing so via different means. This Buddhist core is the essence that the current Dali Lama referred to in the quote at the beginning of this section. The essence is most important, and culture in part determines how to best seek that essence. The emphasis on the essence of faith or belief is part of what holds this diverse group together, along with its cultural identity. ,

Tibetan Buddhism in America began on some university campuses in the 1950's, and grew rapidly in the mid 1960's. It, in a similar fashion to Zen Buddhism in America, grew around charismatic leaders, called Rinpoche (Revered Masters). There Rinpoche have set up

meditation centers and some serve on university faculties. Also, refugees from Tibet make up many but not all of the followers of this Buddhist teaching in America.

In America, there are two schools that include the largest number of followers. The Kagyupa school, headed by Chogyam Trungpa as of 1976, has sought to "Americanize" this Tibetan faith by emphasizing the essentials and not the novel externals that are culturally Tibetan. This group has had some success in attracting people of Caucasian and African ancestry into its movement. The other school is the Nyingma school, headed in 1976 by Tarthang Tulku. This school has not made changes to the Tibetan rituals or customs, believing them to be necessary for accurate transmission of the essence into a Western context. Although both of these groups are not large, their demonstrated ability to reach non Orientals could give these groups a larger impact on American life in the future.

#### H. The U.S. Army, primarily at the local level.

The United States Army is an organization with a long tradition, stretching back to before the American Revolution. The concern for religious matters in this military organization began at the very beginning of the Army, when General Washington made provision to have a chaplain for the troops in 1775. Over the years, there were changes in the concerns and in the forms of this interest in religious matters, but the concern for the spiritual dimension of soldiers and their families continues to this day.

Part of the reason for this continuing interest, to include an institutional military chaplaincy, is due to the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, which provides for the free exercise of religion. Being in the military does not deny the military member access to his or her religious faith. This access includes access to worship services as the military situation allows. This means, on the one hand, that the Army is constitutionally mandated to provide for the religious needs of its soldiers and family members, regardless of what those beliefs entail. On the other hand, there is a set body of military law and Army regulations that the military expects the soldier to conform to and to follow. Tensions in religious matters can occur when there is a perceived or actual conflict between these two mandates. Army pamphlet 600-75, *Accommodating Religious Practices*, outlines how the Army seeks to resolve these potential conflicts at the local level. The existence of this document indicates the attempt to accommodate different religious beliefs, while at the same time maintaining the Army's basic mission and purpose.

The First Amendment is the underlying keystone in understanding the military's approach to religious matters and to the claims of religious groups for acceptance in that organization. Another important aspect is the expectation of the American Army toward the soldier. Regulation and military law expresses this expectation formally and legally. Also, although it lacks legal force, the culture of the Army, with its beliefs and values, plays a role in understanding how the military handles religious issues, particularly at the local level.

I maintain that the American Army does have its own culture, or sub-culture if you prefer, based on its own traditions and lifestyle. Despite the massive (and necessary) efforts of the government to maintain a lifestyle for military members and their families similar to that of civilian life, there is a difference in how military members live. The soldier moves and lives where her or his employer, the Army, tells him or her to live, and stays there for as long as the military wishes that individual to stay there. The local "employer", the unit (or higher level) commander, determines when and how long the soldier works. Working conditions can and often do change drastically at short notice, to include rapid movement to a conflict situation. Also, few employers in civilian life expect their employees to train for armed conflict and to go willingly into a situation where they may very well die.

Overseas duty without family members is common, as is living even longer periods of time overseas with family members. Single members who are junior in rank live in barracks settings, normally two to three to a room, while military provided housing meet the needs for some but not all military members with families. Army installations do include shopping facilities and recreational facilities, but there is no competition on the installation.

Unlike the civilian community, for example, there is only one semi-governmental agency that runs the PX. The PX, which is the equivalent of the department store, has no competition on the military installation. This makes the PX (or other equivalent) a local monopoly on that installation. Also, most of the people on a military installation wear the same uniform and work for the same "employer", which sets up some of the same dynamics as a "company town" in civilian life. .

To look at the civil values of the Army, I chose to look at a more formal and institutional definition of "Army Values" that captures many of these core values that leaders esteem at the local level. For a look at the civil values of the Army in this more formal way, I chose to examine a course of instruction called "Ethical Decision Making", which I received at the Chaplain Center and School in 1985. It is based on an Army pamphlet that I was unable to

obtain a copy of by the time of this writing.

The approach of Ethical Decision Making is a practical one, in which the individual looks at a set of values before coming up with possible decisions and then choosing the best of those decision options. These sets of values are Basic National Values; Ideal Army values; Actual Army Values; Individual Values; Legal Regulatory Standards; Institutional Pressures; and Religious Values. Basic National Values include patriotism, freedom and democracy. Ideal Army Values emphasize valuing leadership skills, competence, loyalty, and duty.

Actual Army values takes into account that these ideal values may not have equal value for real people in a real situation. The consideration of individual values is also important, along with the legal and regulatory implications of any proposed course of action. Finally, any institutional pressures or emphasis needs to be a part of the decision making process along with religious values. ,

This formal way of looking at decision making in an ethical manner, with publication in a pamphlet and its teaching in military schools, indicates that the military places a high value on organization and reason. Although one must at times go with ones "gut feelings" (and that is valued over avoiding a decision), the Army prefers well reasoned and thought through decisions.

Also, looking at these values, such as loyalty to the nation and leadership skills, shows some of the organizational culture of the Army. These values demonstrate that the Army is a hierarchical organization with a strong sense of pride, confidence in its abilities, strong loyalty to the American government, and loyalty to its leaders. , There is a "can-do" attitude expressed here as well, in the confidence that there is a solution to any problem and any obstacle, including providing an institutional system for ethical decision making. The relative lack of its official use does not diminish its use as a symbol of Army values. ,

Important for the understanding of its interaction with non-Western religious groups is the fact that the Army seeks to be a leader in race relations and in promoting racial equality. Since President Truman enacted his executive order in the late 1940's banning segregation in

military units, the Army has sought to end racial discrimination. Over time, this emphasis grew more pronounced in the military, with diminishing local toleration of segregation. I see the results of this policy daily in the Army, and I also see it in my experiences. Overt racism is simply not acceptable in most places, and a struggle against covert racism continues.

As a Chaplain, in the past I supervised African American soldiers, and I worked directly under other African Americans as their subordinate. This is not unusual in a military setting, due to the long history of supporting equal opportunity. The military now has about 45 years, with varying degrees of success, of fighting preference based on race. The loyalty and integrity of officers is now bound up with equal opportunity, and the Army expects leaders to make decisions based on the merit of the individuals performance. :

Pluralism, and the acceptance and accommodation of pluralism, is more recently part of the Army's expectations on its soldiers and civilian employees. Official documents regarding religious pluralism center on Army pamphlet 600-75, which gives local commanders guidance on how to handle religious requests. This process begins even before the soldier joins the Army. Potential volunteers must agree, in writing, to the fact that the Army may not be able to provide his or her religious services in all situations in order to volunteer. In return, the Army will try to provide those religious services to the best of its ability, given the situation.

Reference materials for chaplains regarding religious groups is found in Department of the Army Pamphlet 165-13 and supplemental pamphlet 165-13-1. These two pamphlets give information dating from the late 1970's on various religious groups. However, some of the sections of the pamphlet are more dated and in need of revision, while others are more current.

In effect, individuals are free to practice their religious beliefs in the Army (or the lack of any religious beliefs), provided that those practices and beliefs do not conflict with the mission or morale of that unit, according to the local commander. Soldiers may, for example, not wear special articles of clothing over their uniforms without special approval. However, it is normally acceptable if these articles are worn under the uniform and out of sight. The military expects

commanders to honor dietary requests by soldiers based on religious reasons, if feasible given the situation. At the same time, the military does not promise the Muslim or the Jewish soldier that there will always be food that meets their individual dietary regulations at all times. The ability to provide food that will meet individual religious dietary needs becomes more problematical in field or remote conditions, far from normal installation support. ,

Overall, the approach of the Army to issues of religious needs is that the Army will try to accommodate those needs, provided that the request does not harm unit safety, health, morale, or unit effectiveness. The Army does not intend to unnecessarily stop any soldier from following their religious beliefs, but cannot promise to provide all that is needed to practice those beliefs in all situations. Chaplains can and will crawl through the mud to hold services with soldiers, as well as go into combat with them, but each soldier cannot be regularly provided the clergy, religious teacher, or rites of their own denomination or sect in combat. ,

This policy does indicate that the Army is capable of change in this area, since it is the local commander who makes many of these decisions regarding the exercise of religious beliefs. Local commanders can modify or change their views based on more information or on a changed situation. Changes in the culture of America does affect military members. These changes are evident in what the military will accommodate and what the military will not accommodate religiously. In terms of accommodation of religious beliefs, it is the local situation that is paramount. ,

Another aspect of life in this military culture is its emphasis on volunteerism. There are many volunteer organizations on a typical military installation. Some of these organizations are also found in civilian communities, such as the American Red Cross, the Boy Scouts, and church (generally called Chapel in the Army) youth groups. Other organizations, such as unit spouses organizations and ACS (Army Community Services) are found only in the military setting.

These organizations can and do often receive support from the military in terms of free space to meet and to conduct their activities. Some, like ACS, are organizations run by the

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military and receive funding for paid staff along with volunteers. Also, these organizations, in varying degrees locally, get support from the lower level unit commanders. Soldiers can, at the unit commanders discretion, receive time off to support these organizations, such as to help with a Boy Scout fund raising drive.

This emphasis on volunteerism is also present in the various groups that meet for worship on a military installation. Lay leaders, who are often volunteers, will lead worship services when there is no chaplain on the installation able to lead those services. For example, when I was in the city of Giessen, Germany in the late 1980's, it was two lay leaders who led the local installation Pentecostal and Muslim groups, since there was no chaplain available for those groups in that area at that time. These religious groups are almost totally volunteer oriented and operate on post under chaplain supervision. This supervision is in terms of relating to the institutional Army, such as a place to meet, and do not impinge on matters of faith and doctrine. The use of volunteerism is a way that many small groups meet their religious needs, particularly on smaller installations. 10

## Part Two: Interpretation

### A. The Black Muslims - The Nation of Islam (Farrakhan)

In terms of looking at the stories that define this organization, I believe that the account of its legitimacy is revealing. According to this story, the Honorable Elijah Muhammad said this to Minister Farrakhan in 1972: "Brother, I don't like to talk about this because it gives me great pain but the nation is going to take a dive for the second time. . . But, don't worry Brother. It will be rebuilt and it will never fall again . . . Go exactly as you see me go and do exactly as you see me do . . . you must practice righteousness or they (the enemy) will pierce you in two."

This story is a key connection for the "new" Nation of Islam, giving it legitimacy and at the same time defining its role and mission. Here is an account of passing on the legacy from one leader to another, explaining for the group what happened to the old Nation and explaining the need for a new organization also called the Nation of Islam. Also, the injunction to say and to do exactly what Elijah Muhammad did and said gives the Nation its mission. To keep the old mission of the original Nation alive in its original understanding and to continue its original mission is the goal of the present day Nation of Islam. Its enemies include not the American Muslim Mission per se but remain the same enemies as the old Nation.

This maintaining of the older understanding of the Nation's purpose and mission can be seen in its use of symbols and ceremonies. The new Nation has Ministers, as opposed to Imams, and has reinstated the security oriented Fruit of Islam. New members must write their letter to get their new Islamic name as before, copying the form of the letter exactly. Also, they must write this letter by hand. The old negative emphasis on any afterlife or personal salvation is derided as "spooky", just as before. This emphasis on the old symbols reinstates and maintains them for the new Nation.

The ceremonies of the new Nation are those of the old Nation, including mass Savior's Day rallies complete with rows of white scarved women separate from the rows of black suited men. Worship remains centered on the lecture from the podium, with security men from the

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Fruit of Islam standing next to the speaker. Despite some changes in the approach of the Nation of Islam, such as its involvement in American political life, its heart and soul is that of the old Nation, by design. The creation myth of Yakub regains its former central role in the teaching and doctrine of the Nation. As before, Black nationalism and an emphasis on understanding issues in terms of race remain key emphasis. :

Louis Farrakhan's ability to resurrect the Nation of Islam in its original form indicates that there remains a strong appeal for this kind of approach in Black America. What Minister Farrakhan did was to rebuild the entire structure of the Nation from scratch. Temples, ministers, and even most of the membership all came out of the urban ghetto. Also, most of these new members of the rebuilt Nation of Islam were probably new members were not once part of the American Muslim Mission. The rebuilt Nation was as new in membership, for the most part, as its recently purchased buildings. This new membership for the Nation indicates the appeal of the Nation's message in Black urban areas. Also, the fact that the new Nation's power base is in the Black urban ghettos, as was the old, indicates this continuing appeal and source of power.

The appeal of the Nation of Islam and its future impact in American life thus appears to be directly connected to the Black urban ghettos. Ironically, this connection also appears to be an inverse relationship. When Black urban ghetto residents believe themselves to be under greater oppression, the message of the Nation of Islam has more appeal and greater power. Conversely, when life looks more hopeful in the Black urban communities, when it seems to the residents in the poorer neighborhoods that there is more hope in the system, then the appeal of the Nation is weaker.

Since the message of the Nation, as expressed in the creation myth of Yakub, declares that there is no possibility for this political system to ever deliver justice, an affinity exists between hard times in the Black ghettos and membership increases for the Nation. If America can find a solution for the major problems of the urban areas, and implement that solution to a large degree, one effect of that policy would be a severe weakening of the Nation of Islam. Its

fortunes rise and fall on maintaining the creation myth of Yakub in Black communities.

Outside observers can see this maintenance of the old views and old forms in action in the abortive attempt to kill Minister Farrakhan. This abortive conspiracy included an FBI informant and Qubilah Shabazz, a daughter of Malcolm X, as co-conspirators. The motivation for this plot allegedly was Louis Farrakhan's possible direct involvement in the death of Malcolm X, a charge that Farrakhan vigorously denies.

In a press conference that was aired on CNN shortly after this plot became public, Louis Farrakhan gave his views about the incident. Minister Farrakhan began his prepared remarks with tender words toward the family of Malcolm X, including Qubilah Shabazz. Then he alleged that Qubilah had been entrapped in this plot, and began to speculate on who would want to entrap her in this situation. Minister Farrakhan then stated that the U.S. government had something to hide about this matter, as well as something to hide regarding the death of Malcolm X in 1965. The implication Farrakhan drew is that it was the White controlled government that set up this plot. The other conspirator, who was White and an FBI informant, was for Farrakhan the chief agent of his alleged government plot. The reasons Farrakhan gave for this plot was to entrap Qubilah and embarrass the Nation of Islam by reviving the question of Farrakhan's role (if any) in the death of Malcolm X.

Minister Farrakhan's remarks were entirely in accord with the central myth of Yakub, which emphasizes racial unity for Blacks along with distrust of Whites. Farrakhan's sensitive and understanding tone toward a fellow Black person, along with the allegations towards the government as White controlled and out to harm Blacks, reemphasizes the racial heart of the Nation. In the Nation of Islam, everything revolves around the myth of the mad scientist Yakub, and every event that happens must be seen in light of this myth. What Minister Farrakhan said, in forgiving one of the alleged conspirators against him while condemning the authorities that stopped the plot, is consistent with following this central myth of the Nation. ,

In terms of the relationship between the current Nation of Islam and the U.S. Army, what

is present is not an elective affinity, to borrow Max Weber's term, but rather its opposite. A "elective disaffinity" better describes the interactions between the two groups. The American military, with its proactive stance on racial equality, cannot tolerate individuals who uphold any one race over another. Any member of the Nation in the Army who sought to openly practice any sort of racial preference would probably not last long in the military. Conversely, members of the Nation would generally not seek even to be in the military or to remain in it, since the military is part of the dominant culture in America. The Nation of Islam, in its teachings, derides any military service for America as "Dying for the White man", as long as it remains the same culturally. It is not a pacifist group but it is against military service for America.

To put it briefly, individuals in each group do not wish generally to be a part of the other. As long as the Army remains a volunteer force, members of the Nation can easily and without penalty avoid military service. If there ever would be a return to a draft, however, there could be tension for members of the Nation who were drafted into military service. Deferments based on religious reasons, due to the lack of pacifism, did not come easily for members of the Nation in the past, such as Muhammad Ali's attempt to do so in the 1960's.

### B. The Black Muslims - The American Muslim Mission (Wallace)

The American Muslim Mission, formerly known as the World Community of Al-Islam in the West, among other names, remains the organizational descendant of the old Nation of Islam under the Honorable Elijah Muhammad. This organization, however, has chosen a different interpretation of the message of Elijah Muhammad, and has chosen new symbols and ceremonies to communicate its more orthodox Islamic message.

Like the new Nation of Islam, the American Muslim Mission has a story about its birth and legitimacy, and also regards itself as the true heir to the legacy of Elijah Muhammad as well as his organization. According to this account, Elijah Muhammad, shortly before his death, heard his son Wallace Deen Muhammad speak on the radio the "pure message of Islam". After hearing this message, he said that he now saw the truth about Islam, and supported the changes toward orthodox Islam that Wallace advocated. This account gives the American Muslim Mission legitimacy as the true heir to the Black Muslim movement, and gives the blessing of the old Nation's leader to the changes in doctrine and approach to culture.

What Imam Muhammad successfully did was to transfer the charismatic leadership to himself from his father, Elijah Muhammad. With this mandate, and with surprisingly little opposition from within the Nation, he remade the Nation into a more orthodox Islamic image. He was able to replace the central myth of Yakub, the core feature of the Nation of Islam, with the Qur'an as the central guide to faith and doctrine. The American Muslim Mission newspaper demonstrates the success of this transformation with its extensive coverage of the activities of Imam Muhammad. The extent of coverage and respect given to his words demonstrate that the mantle of charismatic leadership did transfer to him from his father.

Finally, much of what Imam Muhammad did was in accord with what Malcolm X did after his pilgrimage, when he broke with the Nation of Islam. Malcolm X and Wallace Deen Muhammad were friends, which indicates a desire in the leadership of the Nation as early as the 1960's for a change in doctrine toward more orthodox Islam. Also, Wallace's frequent

disagreements over Nation teaching and doctrine show this internal disagreement in the 1960's and 1970's.

Also, with the change in basic doctrine, came a reinterpretation of the teachings of Elijah Muhammad, with symbolic meanings now given to his words. For example, this reinterpretation underpins the changing of the old understanding of "White devil" as racially based to an understanding of this term as an inner attitude that any person of any race can hold. Membership was then opened to Whites who agreed with the American Muslim Mission's teachings and goals. The White Devil remained the enemy whom Allah would overthrow, but this White devil was now a racist, regardless of skin color.

This shift to a symbolic understanding toward the racial doctrines has led to a more cooperative stance toward the larger culture and to a greater acceptance of the Mission by other leaders in America, including in the military. The Mission has found greater acceptance in American political life, with doors still barred to the Nation of Islam open to it. Acceptance and toleration by the political establishment has led to contacts between the Mission and the American military on official levels. These contacts also led to the commissioning of the first Islamic chaplain in the Army, who entered active duty in January of 1994. ;

The ceremonies of the American Muslim Mission also reflect their change in approach and understanding. The orthodox Islamic calendar, with its traditional feast days and month long fast of Ramadan, hold the central place for expressing the faith, as opposed to Savior's Days rallies. Worship is similar to traditional Islam, with a book by Imam Muhammad explaining the orthodox postures to daily prayer for members of the Mission.

The Mission also plays a strong role in the Muslim community in North America, as indicated by Imam Wallace's role in determining who is Islamic and able to go to Mecca for the Haji pilgrimage from North America. The Nation of Islam's semi-acceptance as an Islamic group was due to Imam Wallace's intervention, also showing the role that the Mission plays among Islamic groups. Traditional Islamic ceremonies are the norm for the Mission, as opposed

to ceremonies that were part of only the old Nation of Islam among Islamic groups. ,

The symbols of the Mission are a mixture of traditional Islamic symbols along with some reinterpreted symbols of the Nation and some new symbols. One example of this is the use of the traditional Islamic title Imam instead of the Nation's term of Minister. The Mission uses the term Bilalian, referring to the original Muzzin, or caller to prayer, for the Prophet Muhammad, to refer to all those of African origin. The Bilalian people, declares the Mission, "are a naturally made prophetic people" due to their slave experience, and are challenged to lead America toward a new social order.

The old emphasis on social justice and change are still part of the Mission, now calling for a peaceful change to an Islamic order for American society. It is interesting to note that some of the older terms, such as "spooky", are also used by the Mission in a negative way, referring to a false or "pie in the sky" kind of piety. Symbolically, the Mission uses traditional Islamic symbols, such as the crescent moon, in the traditional manner for Islam. Also, the use of new and some of the old reinterpreted symbols, such as "White Devils", displays the maintenance of some old traditions in newer forms, such as the strong concern for economic equality and social justice. .

Ironic in this call for social justice is the status of women in the Black Muslim movement. Tensions between traditional Islamic customs for women and Western customs combine with a lack of cultural support for African American women. The result is that women who embrace Western dress and customs risk rejection from other Muslim women, while those who try to adopt traditional Islamic customs have little social support outside of their group. This can make it difficult for African American Muslim women in an American setting, due to this perceived lack of support.

Also, this lack of outside support can (and does) manifest itself in charges that Islam is degrading to women. The values of Islam and the realities of surviving in an American urban ghetto (with welfare rules that can make it hard for marriage without a job, for example) cause

greater stress upon Muslim women. Some Islamic sources call for an Islamic "Woman's world" in America to support these women in their Islamic faith without forcing them to compromise their Islamic practices or beliefs. ,

At the same time, despite this change toward Islamic orthodoxy, differences do exist between the American Muslim Mission and Middle Eastern groups that have started Islamic movements in America. During the Gulf War, military commanders made attempts to meet the need of Islamic soldiers by having local Arab Islamic leaders provide worship services. In some places, the reaction to this effort was mixed, with Black Muslim soldiers asking "Which Islamic service?" before making the decision on whether or not to attend. The need for religious services in a comfortable cultural setting and the desire for separate Black Muslim services indicates the level of difference that still remains between these two groups. ,

Arab Islamic groups, although they follow most of the same rituals and rites as the American Muslim Mission, apparently feel a separate cultural identity as well. Despite their common membership in intra-Islamic groups in America and various attempts at integration, there has been little intermixing between the Mission and its orthodox Islamic counterparts that is felt at the local level.

This may be to the recent changes in the Mission toward Islamic orthodoxy, along with cultural and ethnic differences. The situation appears increasingly to be one where cultural and ethnic differences define the two, as opposed to religious differences. The symbols and rituals are basically the same, but the cultural differences continue to define the two groups. With the passage of time, how strongly each group holds on to its cultural identity will determine the degree of integration between the two. ,

The interactions between the American Muslim Mission (along with the other orthodox Islamic groups) and the Army are far less confrontational in nature, and reflect a good degree of interaction. Members of the Mission (along with other orthodox Islamic soldiers) can and do serve honorably in the Army, and the Mission now has a Muslim Imam on active duty as an

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Army Chaplain. The more accommodating approach of the American Muslim Mission, and its abandonment of racial supremacy, make it far more acceptable to military life. Also, there is an affinity between the two in condemning official or institutionalized racism. This affinity helps the two in their relations to each other and helps to explain why it is the Mission that has the only Islamic chaplain on active duty. The issues regarding pluralism that exist between these two groups are not mutually exclusive, and they revolve around the accommodation of Islamic custom and practices in Army life.

### C. The Buddhist Church in America (BCA).

The stories of the BCA are the stories of its Japanese heritage and cultural identity. Since the majority of its clergy and laity are ethnically Japanese, the BCA functions as a cultural organization as well as a religious one, giving Japanese Americans a sense of belonging in a Western country. The BCA for much of its history functioned as a Japanese American community center where Japanese from various parts of Japan could meet in comfort.

This strength in assimilating immigrants from Japan to American life is also its weakness, due to the drop in immigration rates to America from Japan. Declining membership and the need to adapt to America culturally and not in external forms confronts this religious group. The use of Japanese and the maintaining of Japanese custom will not aid this group as the third generation of Japanese Americans assume leadership roles.

The attempt to become American in outward forms and yet remain Buddhist with a Japanese flavor is evident in the structure and names that the BCA uses. Local temples are called churches, borrowing the name from the more dominant Christian culture. Services are held on Sundays, and many churches in the BCA have Sunday Schools as well to teach the Dharma. The minister wears a black robe with a stole, much like his Protestant counterpart, except that the stole has a Buddhist symbol on it.

The actual service is remarkably similar to a Christian Protestant service in its format, aside from chanting in Japanese. The content of the service is definitely Buddhist, but the pattern of hymns, readings, responsive readings and sermon are similar to some Christian forms of worship. A typical order of worship in a BCA church would include a creed and a sermon along with meditation and ringing the church bell. Even the row like arrangement of the pews, with an altar in the front, looks very much like a Protestant church.

However, the visitor to a BCA church would know that this is not a Christian sanctuary by that same altar, due to what is on it.. A gold figure of the Buddha Amida is in the center of the altar, often with scrolls on either side with portraits of Pure Land Buddhist saints. The BCA

uses candles, flowers, and incense. These items have symbolic meaning for the BCA worshipper. While the service does have many similar elements with a Protestant service, other elements such as the chanting in Japanese indicate this cultural emphasis along with its Buddhist core. The blending of a Christian building interior with a statue of the Amida Buddha is at the heart of the BCA, and is a symbol of its purpose and mission in America.. ;

Why there is this affinity between the external forms of BCA practice and some Christian forms probably lies in the desire for the immigrant Japanese to be accepted as Americans in their new homeland. Racism and stereotyping of Japanese Americans was all too evident during the immigration years. The internment camps for Japanese (but not European) Americans also demonstrate this pattern of discrimination. The desire to be accepted in America probably was the main motivating force behind the affinity between BCA forms and some American Christian forms, despite the fact that the native Japanese forms were not similar. ,

Contacts between the military and the BCA do exist, and the BCA is the only Buddhist organization with permission from the U.S. government to bring Buddhist chaplains into the military. However, as of this writing, no Buddhist chaplain has yet entered the active duty Army, despite the preparations already in place for just such an event. This ability of BCA clergy to enter active duty, despite pacifist tendencies on the part of the denomination, is probably part of the group's attempts to integrate more into American life.

Actual experiences with Buddhist groups occur primarily overseas, in countries with sizable Buddhist populations. One Navy chaplains experience in Japan including working with one such Buddhist group, made up of American military members and their Japanese spouses. This chaplain found this Pure Land group cooperative, but unable to pray with other faiths or even to use the same building for worship along with other faiths. The reason given for this inability to use the same chapel building was that the "object of devotion", a golden Buddha, could not be moved once set in place.. .

It is interesting to note that the Army pamphlets on other religious groups, DA Pamphlet

165-13 and 165-13-1 does not mention this restriction anywhere in either book. This indicates either a local Buddhist practice that is not shared by the BCA or other Buddhist groups in America, or a need for update and further study. As Buddhists enter the military in greater numbers, the need for changes in any written materials will become evident. ;

The BCA's history has been one of adopting external forms from Christian groups. However, this desire for acceptance did not lead to a total denial of Buddhism by all Japanese Americans. The BCA is the result of this desire to fit into American society, maintain some Japanese traditions, and also remain Buddhist. Its future is in large part dependent on its ability to be less ethically oriented in its approach. .

#### D. Zen Buddhism in America.

The image of Zen in the United States is a different one from the BCA and its churches.

The center of Zen life in America is not in a church or in a denominational structure that also acts as a community center, but rather in a meditation or study center. In addition to the study centers, Zen groups can be found in suburban homes and in university centers. Monasticism and an ascetic style of monastic life is also an accepted part of life in American Zen, although the forms in which this takes varies from center to center. ,

What symbols best describe Zen in the United States vary widely and depend on the individual Zen master and his or her school of disciples. In some American Zen settings folding chairs for beginners and shorter meditation sessions is the norm. In other Zen centers the traditional Japanese rituals are rigorously maintained, including the use of the stick (rapped on the back between the shoulders) to help wandering minds refocus their thoughts. Some Zen schools maintain most of the old customs while modifying some other customs to accommodate their Western students.

In Zen circles, a debate continues over the best way to present Zen to Westerners. Some maintain that traditional koans and meditation forms are intrinsic to Zen and that Zen must maintain these forms. Other Zen masters create new koans, maintain that Japanese or Chinese forms are cultural in nature, and they plead for a truly American Zen. Regardless of approach, all of Zen's leaders in America agree on the goal of enlightenment, differing only on the best approach for the Western mind.

Christmas Humphries, a leader of Zen in England, calls for techniques and methods better suited for Western minds, while maintaining the goal of enlightenment and the essentials of Zen. Humphries' model for achieving zazen, or enlightenment, has four stages. These stages are intellectual and thought centered, with the final stage going beyond thought to initiative knowledge. ,

The influence of the "Beat Zen" of the 1960's and its reliance on separation in terms of

meditation and retreats make it less suited to military life than the BCA. I have worked with a number of Buddhist soldiers in the military, but none that practiced the Zen form of Buddhism. I believe that Zen's pacifist and meditative approach would lead devotees away from military service or from joining the military. This results, I feel, in another "elective disaffinity" between the military and Zen, although on a far less severe level than the one that exists between the military and the Nation of Islam. This disaffinity probably means that contacts between Zen and the military will be sporadic and isolated to individual situations. :

#### E. Soka Gakkai International - USA

The symbol for Soka Gakkai in America prior to 1991 would probably be the Gohonzon, which believers use as a focus for chanting and prayer. Chanting and the use of the Gohonzon is central in the rituals of Soka Gakkai, along with the Nichiren Shoshu priesthood. Although teaching and social gatherings are also part of this movement in America, chanting with the Gohonzon is at the core of the religion.

The reason why I say that this would be the symbol prior to 1991 is due to the schism between the Nichiren Shoshu priesthood and the lay led Soka Gakkai organization. The result of this split is a laity with few priests and a priesthood in America with few followers. Each group is suspicious of the other and accuse the other of various falsehoods. The likelihood of a re-unification of these two groups is remote as of 1995.

I believe that another symbol of the Soka Gakkai movement at the present time is a large question mark. The reason why I assign this symbol to the Soka Gakkai is that it is uncertain at this time where the movement will go. Unity and a claim to the one true faith, always a part of the old Nichiren Shoshu, is now disputed between two rival groups. Also, there is a spirit of animosity between the two groups, with anti-Soka Gakkai forces claiming massive financial mismanagement in the organization.

Each group now claims to be the true spiritual descendant of the former unity, and derides the claim of the other. The Soka Gakkai leadership dispute the Nichiren Shoshu claim of large Soka Gakkai membership losses, and the Soka Gakkai's shift back to more assertive evangelism may or may not be a reflection of actual decline. What the Soka Gakkai do in the face of these changes may well determine its future success in America as well as elsewhere in the world.

The Soka Gakkai's strong support of the American dream and the status quo in American political life probably means that Soka Gakkai soldiers would fit in well into the military milieu. The stated Soka Gakkai values of loyalty to the American nation and of service to the nation

coincide well with military values. Also, an affinity exists between the values of this organization and the military, in terms of loyalty to America and its government. Whether this will translate into an elective affinity between the military and the Soka Gakkai, in terms of numbers in military service and military chaplains, is another question mark that only the future can decide. .

#### F. Tibetan Buddhism in America.

Tibetan Buddhism in America is a combination of Tantric Buddhist practices with native Tibetan Bon religion, along with parts of Tibetan cultural life. Many of its devotees are ethnically Tibetan, although some are ethnically Caucasian. Tibetan Buddhism is similar to Zen in America, in that both use meditation centers and reliance on religious leaders. In Tibetan Buddhism, these Rinpoche, or leaders, form the nucleus around which Buddhist life in this tradition revolves. ,

Another aspect of Tibetan Buddhism, or Lamaism, as it is sometimes called, is that it is somewhat like the BCA in having an ethnic orientation. This orientation is toward Tibet rather than Japan, but the same pattern of preserving cultural traditions of Tibet is found in some of the Lamaist centers. One school of Lamaism in America, that of Tibetan Nyingmapa Meditation Center, represents this attempt to maintain Tibetan culture, in an American setting. ,

Like Zen, however, there is a school of Tibetan Buddhism that seeks to modify its external beliefs in order to present the essentials of Lamaism to Westerners. The Kagyupa school, led by Chogyam Trungpa, seeks to minimize the exotic parts of Tibetan Buddhist ritual and emphasize the basics of Tibetan Buddhist belief. Part of this approach to the West is due to the belief that Westerners are not yet generally ready for advanced Lamaist practices. Since they were not raised in a culture that followed these religious practices, this Buddhist school maintains that a less advanced form of Lamaism is best for the present time. ,

The cultural emphasis of Lamaist Buddhism probably means that there is a connection between Tibetan religion and Tibetan politics, at least in terms of working for the eventual independence of Tibet from China. Due to this emphasis, there seems not to be much of an affinity between Lamaism and the American military. Also, the emphasis on Rinpoche leadership would lead followers to want to maintain access to these leaders, which would be much harder in a military setting. Like Zen, contacts between Lamaism and the military will probably be isolated to individual situations and individual soldiers. ,

### G. The U.S. Army - at its lower levels.

The stories told in the Army about itself demonstrates much about the values that it holds dear. One speech that General MacArthur made late in his career emphasized three things as central to the American Army. They were, Duty, Honor, and Country, and they summed up what the ideal should be for the Army in his view.

Duty refers to doing what one is supposed to do. This includes using ones intelligence and initiative in carrying out that duty. To do ones duty is to get the job done, or to give every effort toward accomplishing that task. Duty means extra hours at the job as needed to do the job, along with gathering the resources and people needed to complete the task at hand. However, this concept of duty is not a blind kind of loyalty, although loyalty is a key aspect of duty. If the task is impossible or suicidal due to changed events, the loyalty is to the intent of the task given. Seeking to carry out the intent by very different means is also doing ones duty.

This concept of duty reflects the hierarchical nature of the Army. It shows the high value placed on a "team player", who will do what the Army expects of him or her. This concept also demonstrates the value placed on thinking and on reacting to a changed situation. Seeking to keep the intent of the commanders orders is the ideal, while creatively applying a different solution to the problem.

Honor is another part of the ideal that the Army expects all who serve as soldiers to strive toward. Honor includes personal honesty and integrity, combined in a person who will state their opinions fearlessly in support of the common good. A person displaying this trait cannot be bought or seduced from what he or she knows to be the right and moral course of action.

Honor can and does come into tension with duty at times, particularly in instances when it seems to conflict with loyalty to ones superior. If, for example, a soldier believes that his or her superior is following a poor course of action, the Army, ideally, expects the soldier to state their views along with the reason why. Loyalty comes in by accepting the superiors decision (if the superior does not change their position) and by honestly seeking to implement that decision

of the commander.

Loyalty to the Army is also part of honor, if the superiors decision contains aspects that are illegal or against Army policy. Then the soldier's duty is to bring the problem to a higher authority, despite possible personal risk to ones own career by doing so. Honor ideally includes maintaining ones integrity even if it means the loss of ones own career.

Country, the third value mentioned, includes the values of loyalty to the United States of America and to the elected officials of the nation. Patriotism and concern for America are also part of that value. It impacts less on the average soldier in peacetime, but is a more influential value in wartime situations. Along with duty and honor, country is part of what the Army ideally values and esteems.

The Army is an organization that esteems ceremony, despite some that verbally deny any such inclination as do some junior officers. National holidays and military rites of passage such as changes of command and unit "Hail and Farewells" are times for ceremony. Sometimes these ceremonies are formal in nature, such as a unit parade and ceremony in full battle gear for the changing of command from one individual to another. Other ceremonies are more informal, such as the gathering of a unit's officers at a local restaurant to say hello to newly arrived officers and to say good bye to departing officers.

The hail and farewell, at the battalion level ( a unit of about 600 to 1200 soldiers, commanded by a Lieutenant Colonel), consists generally of the unit's commander, after the officers shared a meal together, taking the floor to speak. The commander then welcomes those who are new to the unit and introduces them to the assembled group, which includes the spouses of the new officers present.

After these introductions, the commander then bids farewell to those leaving the unit, generally giving the departing officer a memento and giving that individual a few minutes to publicly say good bye to all in the unit. This ceremony marks the rites of passage in terms of comings and goings, noting who is now part "of us" and who is now "leaving us". It also

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reinforces group unity and cooperation, as do the other ceremonies commonly used in the Army.

The Army is rich in the use of symbols. Symbols of rank denote authority and implied respect, for the rank at least if not for the individual wearing that rank. Flags denote the presence of a unit or of that units commander, while general officers have a personal flag that generally announces their presence anywhere (in a military setting) outside of a combat zone. Individual awards for competence, service or for bravery are worn on the dress uniform, demonstrating past achievements to any and all who know the meaning of the symbols. The use of symbols in many and varied forms reinforce the hierarchical nature of the Army, along with its commitment to "duty, honor, and country".

The fact that the American flag always holds the place of honor over any military flags is only one instance of this commitment to country as reinforced by the symbol. Formal award ceremonies, where deserving individuals receive awards for meritorious service or for an act of bravery, demonstrate the commitment to duty and to honor to all in that unit assembled at the ceremony.

The purpose of this chart is to give a graphic view of some of the similarities and differences between faiths more familiar to Americans and the faiths discussed in this thesis.

COMPARISON CHART				
GROUP:	BELIEF IN:			
	One God	Heaven (afterlife)	Dietary Restrictions	Political Stance
Christianity	Yes	Yes	Varied	Varied
Judaism	Yes	Yes	Yes	Varied
Orthodox Islam	Yes	Yes	Yes	Varied
Nation of Islam	Yes	No	Yes	Black Nationalist
BCA	No	No(1)	Varied	Varied
Zen Buddhism	No	No	Encouraged	Varied / Pacifist
Soka Gakkai	No	No(1)	Varied	Support status quo
Tibetan Budd.	No	No	Encouraged	Varied/pro indep.

1. There is a belief in Pure Land Buddhist groups in a paradise, ruled by the Buddha Amida, into which a devotee can be reborn after this life. However, this paradise is not the final goal, but a further step on the way to the final goal, which remains Nirvana.

## Part Three: Evaluation

### a. Islam & Buddhism in a Military Setting

Islam and Buddhism are very different faiths, with different presuppositions and a different basis for their religious belief systems. Islam's strong emphasis on one God, in relationship to a distinctly different and subordinate universe, is the opposite of Buddhism's concept that all that exists is one essential unity, with no divisions that really exist. In areas where the two faiths have existed in contact with the other, there has rarely been understanding or cooperation between the two. The conversion of central Asia and the extinction of Buddhism in India until the last century under Islamic rule are examples of this often conflict ridden relationship.

However, in an American military setting, individual adherents of these two faiths will need to practice understanding or at least toleration towards the other. The military demands and expects all of its service members to cooperate and work together as a team, even to the point of relying on one another in life and death situations. The military would quickly isolate and possibly punish any service member who is unable to practice this close cooperation and who demonstrates that intolerance. In this hierarchical military setting, members of the Buddhist and Islamic faiths will need to work together individually and as faith groups or they will not remain a part of that setting.

For members of Islam, Christians and Jews are tolerated by religious law as "People of the Book", making cooperation with members of these faiths more tolerable for devout Muslims. Buddhism does not enjoy this status in Islam, and the Muslim soldier will need to accept the Buddhist soldier as a soldier, even if the Muslim soldier does not like the Buddhist faith. The Muslim soldier may even be in a position, possibly, where he or she is aiding a Buddhist country in a conflict with an Islamic country. For Islam to be acceptable in the military setting in large numbers, this possibility must be acceptable to the Muslim soldier.

For the Buddhist, the military demands the same level of toleration and acceptance for

Muslim soldiers. Due to the historically more accepting approach of Buddhist schools of thought toward other faiths, this toleration is doctrinally easier for some of the Buddhist groups than for most Muslim groups. However, Buddhist groups such as Soka Gakkai are just as insistent as Islam in terms of defending their "true faith". Members of these more evangelistic and aggressive Buddhist faiths will need to accept the Muslim soldier as a soldier, despite their religious differences.

Historically, as evidenced by the role that Japanese American soldiers played in World War II, the military can generally expect members of these two faiths to perform their roles as soldiers in the military. The exception to this willingness to serve is the Nation of Islam, which refuses to fight in any "White man's war". The Soka Gakkai, despite their insistence that only they, including other Buddhist groups, have the sole "true faith", have a very supportive position towards the American governmental system. This support should aid members of that group in serving honorably in the military.

Another difference between members of the Buddhist faith and the Islamic faith is an ethnic one. With some exceptions, notably among the Soka Gakkai, members of the Buddhist faith in America are ethnically Oriental. Islamic adherents in America are generally from West Asia, North Africa, or the Indian subcontinent. In addition, indigenous Islam exists in large numbers among African Americans. This means that there is an ethnic difference and a cultural difference as well as a religious difference between Buddhists and Muslims in an American military setting.

The addition of this ethnic difference will make it somewhat harder for individual Buddhists and Muslims to practice the cooperation and teamwork that the military needs to succeed. However, the long history of the military in combating racism and in supporting equal opportunity will aid the military in assimilating members of other faiths. Military rites of passage such as basic training tend to build new bonds between otherwise diverse individuals. Also, the hierarchical nature of the Army will enforce cooperation between soldiers at all levels.

The Army will actively try to root out any individuals who would seek to threaten cooperation and teamwork with any other soldiers.

In the Army, commanders will need to be aware of the legitimate religious needs of both Buddhists and Muslims. Issues, such as dietary restrictions, will need more attention than in the past. Unit activities such as prayer breakfasts, which were traditionally either Christian or Judeo-Christian, will need to take into account the needs of Buddhist and Muslim soldiers.

These observances could take the form of a more interfaith kind of rite, a secular ceremony, or separate observances based on religious faith. Islam and Buddhism are now part of the American landscape, and the military will need to understand this fact. How the military handles the resulting issues in pluralism will do much to insure that Buddhist and Muslim soldiers function well in a military environment.

b. Issues in Pluralism for Muslims & Buddhists

Evaluating Islam, Buddhism, and the American Army in interaction raises issues of pluralism and also raises issues regarding the interaction between religion and culture. It is not likely that Buddhism or Islam will fade from the American scene at any time in the foreseeable future, given the current immigration patterns. Also, the development of two different groups out of the old Nation of Islam would indicate that these are growing movements, with distinct positions and relationships regarding orthodox Islamic groups and to the dominant American culture. This distinction also carries over into their relationship with the culture of the Army and its civil values.

The dietary issue is one that affects both Muslims and Buddhists. Buddhists are encouraged to eat a simple diet, following the "Middle way" of moderation in all things. Many are vegetarian, and members of the monastic community traditionally do not eat after the noon meal. While monks can eat later in the day if the situation requires it, this practice could lead to misunderstanding in a social situation, such as a Buddhist chaplains involvement with an evening meal as part of a unit hail and farewell. Leaders will need communication and understanding in dealing with potential misunderstandings.

For Muslims, the dietary issue is more involved and restrictive. Muslims are forbidden to eat pork or pork products, even if eating pork would save their lives. The military can almost always accommodate these Islamic restrictions against pork and certain other foods in garrison settings. During field training and overseas deployments, the problem becomes more difficult due to the limited variety found in field meals. Often soldiers carry their meals for a few days with them, in prepackaged plastic bags. These field rations, called MRE's (Meals Ready to Eat), were in the past made without any option for those with any dietary restrictions. The Army's current development of field rations that meet Islamic, Jewish, and vegetarian needs will go a long way toward alleviating this issue.

The dietary issue for Muslims surrounding the month long Ramadan fast is more

problematical. This fast lasts each day from dawn to sunset. Muslims, with some exceptions for compassionate reasons such as illness, must go without food or water during the daylight hours for the duration of this fast. Soldiers actually at war can be exempt from the fast, but Islam otherwise expects soldiers to adhere to the fast, unless they are seriously sick or pregnant.

Also, Muslim military members must continue to do their assigned tasks during Ramadan, which could include heavy physical work in extreme weather conditions. Also, particularly in smaller installations, meal times may end before sundown or at times stop (for breakfast) before dawn. It will be more difficult for Muslim soldiers to observe the day long fast during each day of Ramadan and also eat during that month if their dining facility is not open during the hours of darkness.

Since local conditions vary greatly, local commanders will need to handle this issue with awareness and sensitivity to the religious need. Providing single Muslim soldiers with additional funds to purchase their own food during the time of the fast (as married soldiers get in the form of an additional pay) could be a solution for many installations. A willingness on the part of military leaders to seek to accommodate the dietary needs of Muslim soldiers will probably result in satisfactory solutions for most situations. Since the Muslim soldier did agree to the possibility of limited meals as a pre-condition for voluntarily joining the Army, accommodation when feasible should generally work for the Muslim soldier.

Building restrictions for religious use on military installations is another issue in pluralism. Islam separates men, women, and older children in worship, and needs on open space without any chairs or pews. Prayer is mandated by Islam five times a day, and an installation with a large number of Islamic soldiers would need a space for prayer at various times of the day. Current military policy generally does not allow any one religious group the exclusive use of any chapel building. :

Also, modesty requirements in mixed worship settings for Islamic prayers would call for a balcony to separate the women from the men. Imam Hainad Ahmad Chebli, the religious leader

of the Central Jersey Islamic Center, notes that a balcony is the best way to allow for Islamic worship, unless separate services were held at different locations. At the present time, there are very few chapels with no seating in the central area and a balcony on one side. Also, Islam prefers that when a building becomes a place for Islamic worship, that the building retain that exclusive function. Sharing worship space with non Muslim groups has not yet become an issue, but this could become a potential issue in pluralism for the Army.

The modesty issue also surrounds Islamic woman in the Army. The requirement to keep the body covered includes a shawl over the head and neck, which is unacceptable in most military settings over a uniform. The female Islamic soldier will also face wearing a physical training uniform that does not cover the body in accordance with strict Islamic law. It will be difficult for the Muslim woman to serve in the military unless she modifies her dress to conform with the military regulations, against strict Islamic custom. If she, like some other female Muslims in America, can make this modification, military service is possible even under field conditions.

For Buddhist worship, there is a practice that people should not regularly move the "Object of Devotion", a golden statue of the Buddha, once placed on an altar. This restriction would make it difficult to use the room for any other purpose than Buddhist functions. Also, it would work against the no exclusive use guideline if a building was reserved for Buddhist worship. Providing a side room for Buddhist functions and worship in a chapel may be an answer, if such a room is available. Another possible solution would be to place a cover over the object of devotion, making the room suitable for other groups..

The Army chaplaincy will need to look at chapel construction in the future, keeping these issues in mind. A chapel building that has more than one central worship area in its design could aid in meeting these more diverse religious needs. Such a multi-sanctuary design would also keep the principle of no exclusive use for a whole chapel building by any one religious group.

Issues in pluralism also exist in the area of personal clothing, as I noted in terms of attire

for female Muslims. Islamic Imams do wear a knitted cap, somewhat larger than the skullcap that observant orthodox Jews wear. In some Buddhist traditions, monks and priests wear robes as a sign of their calling. Army regulations call for uniformity in military dress, permitting only some limited exceptions for religious reasons on the local level.

Army policy is generally to allow only those religious items that are not seen under the uniform, such as the wearing of a cross on a chain around the neck. Potential volunteers for military service must agree to this restriction in expression, or they will not enter military service. Since Army units and situations vary widely, local commanders have the authority to allow some exceptions to the uniform policy, such as allowing Jewish personnel to wear religious headgear. As long as the military remains a all volunteer force, clothing restrictions will probably remain, with only individuals willing to accept this restriction entering military service.

A fourth issue for pluralism lies in the loyalty of the Buddhist and Muslim soldier to the American government and its military. I do not believe, given the experience of the Army in armed conflicts (including the Gulf War), that there will be any significant problems regarding the willingness of Islamic (or Buddhist) soldiers to serve as soldiers, despite concerns regarding some individuals. Past experiences with other groups, such as with Japanese American soldiers during World War Two, indicate that loyalty to America and to the military unit will stay strong.

However, there could conceivably be a potential issue for some Muslim soldiers if they felt that they were fighting against Islam or against the Islamic side in a Jihad, or holy war. Due to the low numbers of Muslim soldiers in the military, the Army can adopt a case by case approach to this issue, when it would surface, at the local level. Also, it may be advisable for the Army to look at permitting conscientious objection (CO status), in terms of an objection based on religious reasons that does not include pacifism. Present CO policy assumes pacifism or a strong moral objection to war as essential to any CO claim. This modification would cover members of the Nation of Islam in their objection to military service.

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The political agenda of the American Muslim Mission, which supports the views of the Rainbow Coalition, should not raise any major issues regarding pluralism and religious freedom. Other religious groups, such as the Soka Gakkai, have political viewpoints, and soldiers are free to hold and express their views privately. Political activity, outside of voting, is restricted for all those in the military. The Army expects that Buddhist and Muslim soldiers hold to the same standards as other soldiers.

In summary, the Army is a part of American culture that has values of its own, emphasizing "duty, honor, and country" as key values. The interaction with most Muslims and Buddhists can be a peaceful one, particularly if the dietary concerns of the Muslims can be addressed fully. On the other hand, the mutually exclusionary views of the military and the current Nation of Islam lends itself toward mutual avoidance. The Army bases its response to each religious group on how individual Muslims and Buddhists act in the military. Their individual behavior as soldiers in large part determines the response of the Army, in terms of accommodation or expulsion. ,

## Appendix A

### The Truth

The Truth as revealed by Allah, in the Person of Master Fard Muhammad, to Messenger Elijah Muhammad, verifies the Truth of the Bible and Holy Qur'an.

By Elijah Muhammad

1. **IT IS TRUE** that we must come face to face with God in the resurrection.
2. **IT IS ALSO TRUE** that we must come face to face in the reality of the devil.
3. **ALLAH HAS TAUGHT MUHAMMAD** that the white race is the devil.
4. **IT IS TRUE** that the Lost-Found so-called Negros are members of the Divine Family.
5. **IT IS TRUE** that the scriptures verify the truth that we must be returned again to our own.
6. **IT IS TRUE** that before they can be returned they must first have a knowledge of self.
7. **IT IS TRUE** that the Black Nation has no birth record.
8. **IT IS TRUE** that the white race (the devils) had its beginning 6,000 years ago and its time was limited to that period of time (6,000 years).
9. **IT IS TRUE** that they have lived and ruled the darker people under evil, filth, indecency and deceit. They have built a world of sport and play.
10. **IT IS TRUE**, according to the scripture of both the Bible and Holy Qur'an, that God would, on finding the Lost members, set those who believe into heaven. This is true, according to the great change in the lives of

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Muhammad and his followers.

11. IT IS TRUE that there will be a display of the power of Allah (God) against the wicked to whom the Lost-Found members are in subjection.
12. IT IS TRUE that Messenger Muhammad is now warning this government that Almighty God Allah has numbered America as being number one on His list for destruction because of the evil done to His people, the Lost-Found members of the original Divine People of the earth, with storms, rain, hail, snow, and earthquakes. These plagues of judgment are now going on over America.
13. IT IS TRUE that we are now being called by the white man's names. It is equally true that the Bible teaches us that on the resurrection we must accept the name of God, which shall live forever, if we are to see the Hereafter. This warning, Messenger Muhammad warns us, the so-called Negroes, daily.
14. IT IS TRUE, according to the religious scientists of both Christianity and Islam, as both agree that this year 1966, of the Christian calendar, and which is 1386 of the Arabic calendar, is the fateful year of America and her people, and that the so-called Negroes should fly to Allah and follow messenger Muhammad, for refuge from the dreadful judgment that Allah has said that He will bring, and which have already begun upon America.

This statement was originally published in Muhammad Speaks, April 1, 1966. Lee, *The Nation of Islam*, Appendix B.

## APPENDIX B

### WHAT THE MUSLIMS WANT

By Elijah Muhammad

1. We want freedom. We want a full and complete freedom.
2. We want justice. Equal justice under the law. We want justice applied equally to all, regardless of creed or color.
3. We want equality of opportunity. We want equal membership in society with the best in civilized society.
4. We want our people in America, whose parents or grandparents were descendants from slaves, to be allowed to establish a separate territory of their own . . .
5. We want freedom for all Believers of Islam now held in federal prisons. We want freedom for all black men and women now under death sentence in innumerable prisons in the North as well as in the South. We want every black man and woman to have the freedom to accept or reject being separated from the slavemaster's children and establish a land of their own . . .
6. We want an immediate end to the police brutality and mob attacks against the so-called Negro throughout the United States.
7. As long as we are not allowed to establish a state or territory of our own, we demand not only equal justice under the laws of the United States, but equal employment opportunities - NOW . . .
8. We want the government of the United States to exempt our people from ALL taxation as long as we are deprived of equal justice under the laws of the land.
9. We want equal education - but separate schools up to 16 for boys and 18 for girls on the condition that the girls will be sent to women's colleges and universities. We want all black children educated, taught without

hindrance or suppression.

10. We believe that intermarriage or race mixing should be prohibited. We want the religion of Islam taught without hindrance or suppression.

From Lee, *The Nation of Islam, Appendix A.*

Footnotes:Introduction:

1. Bellah, *Beyond Belief*, p. 168 ff.
2. Bellah, *Ibid.*
3. Mamiya, *Islam in North America*, p. 173 ff.
4. Berger, *The Other Side of God*, p. 3-7.

Part I: DescriptionA: Traditional Islamic Beliefs

1. Speight, *God is One*, p. 1-3.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 32-37.
3. Cragg & Speight, *The House of Islam*, p. 60-64.
4. Speight, *God is One*, p. 15-22.
5. From a lecture by Prof. Speight at Princeton Theological Seminary, 14 February 1995.
6. Borrman, Maurice. *Interreligious Documents I*, p. 100-111.
7. Haddad, ed. *The Muslims of America*, p. 11-18.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 12-14.
9. *Ibid*, p. 14-16.
10. *Ibid*, p. 27.

B: The Black Muslim Movement

1. Thompson, *American Daughter*, p. 83 - 84.
2. X, Malcolm, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, p. 36.
3. Lee, *The Nation of Islam*, p. 28 - 29.
4. Lincoln, *The American Muslim Mission*, in *The Muslim Community*, p. 220 - 221.
5. Hill & Bair, *Marcus Garvey, Life and Lessons*, introduction.
6. Lincoln, *The Black Muslims in America*, p. 11-15.
7. Lee, p. 32-34.
8. *Ibid*, p. 38-41.
9. Lincoln, *The Black Muslims in America*, p. 76-79.
10. *Ibid*, p. 80-83.
11. Waugh et al, *The Muslim Community in North America*, introduction.
12. X, Malcolm, p. 169 ff.
13. *Ibid*, p. 211-218.
14. Lincoln, *The Black Muslims in America*, p. 190-191.
15. *Ibid*, p. 263-265.
16. Muhammad, *Prayer and Al-Islam*, p. xvii ff.
17. Mamiya, p. 170-174.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 177-178.
19. Lincoln, *The Black Muslims in America*, p. 263-266.
20. Mamiya, p. 178-179
21. Lincoln, *The Black Muslims in America*, p. 269-271.
22. Haddad, ed. *The Muslims of America*, p. 27 ff.
23. Lincoln, *The Black Muslims in America*, p. 268-269.
24. Anon., *Muslim Journal*, Vol. 19, no. 13, Jan, 1994.
25. Haddad, p. 19-20.

C: Traditional Buddhist Beliefs

1. Neusner, *World Religions in America*, p. 203.
2. Lectures on Buddhism by Prof. Ryerson on Buddhism at Princeton Seminary, Fall, 1994.

3. Ibid.
4. Forman et al, ed. *Religions of Asia*, p. 103 ff.
5. Ibid., p. 104-106.
6. Ibid.
7. Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught*, p. 16 ff.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid., p. 29 ff.
10. Ibid., p. 35 ff.
11. Robinson and Johnson, *The Buddhist Religion*, p. 26-29.
12. Forman et al, *World Religions in America*, p. 109.
13. Abe, in *Our Religions*, p. 124-125.
14. Robinson & Johnson, p. 75-76.

**D. The Buddhist Church in America (BCA).**

1. Kashima, *Buddhism in America: The Social Organization...*, p. 3-5. This work is a detailed study on the BCA and its history.
2. Ibid., p. 14-16.
3. Ibid., p. 5-8.
4. Ibid., p. 14-25.
5. Ibid., p. 35-45.
6. Ibid., p. 47-59.
7. Ibid., p. 59-63.
8. Ibid., p. 116-118.
9. Bloom, *Pacific World*, p. iv.

**E. Zen Buddhism in America.**

1. Reps, *Zen Flesh, Zen Bones*, p. 35.
2. Merton, *Zen and the Birds of Appetite*, p. 1-2.
3. Ibid., p. 5-6.
4. Layman, *Buddhism in America*, p. 53-56.
5. Ibid., p. 64-65.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid., p. 67-69.
8. Ibid., p. 66-67.
9. Prebish, *American Buddhism*, p. 5-10
10. Boucher, p. 2-4.
11. Ibid., p. 161-163.

**F. Soka Gakkai International - USA**

1. de Bary, *The Buddhist Tradition*, p. 349-350
2. Ibid., p. 345-348.
3. Layman, p. 115-117.
4. Hurst, *Nichiren Shoshu Buddhism and the Soka Gakkai in America*, p. 139.
5. Layman, p. 124-125.
6. Dept. of the Army Pamphlet 165-13-1, p. IV-11.
7. Hurst, p. 164-165.
8. Metraux, *The Soka Gakkai Revolution*, p. 130-135.
9. Hurst, p. 169 ff.
10. Metraux, p. 135-142.

**G. Tibetan Buddhism in America.**

1. Keegan, *The Dalai Lama's Historic Visit to North America*, no page numbers.
2. Fenton, p. 148-149.

3. Robinson & Johnson, p. 140-145.
4. Ibid, p. 145-153.
5. Layman, p. 87-88.
6. Robinson & Johnson, p. 142-145.
7. Layman, p. 90-91.
8. Layman, p. 91-106.

**H: The U. S. Army**

1. Anon, *FM 16-1*, p. 1-1 to 1-2.
2. These comments are based on my personal experiences as a Chaplain in the U.S. Army from 1985 to 1995. They are not official Army or governmental positions.
3. From an Ethical Decision Making course: Army Chaplains School; summer of 1985.
4. The loyalty of Army personnel to their leaders is very strong, and remains strong regardless of any personal preferences. This loyalty extends from ones immediate superior all the way to the President, and has remained so during the Clinton administration.
5. From an Ethical Decision Making course; Army Chaplains School; summer of 1985.
6. From personal experiences in the Army from 1985 to 1995.
7. Army Pamphlet 600-75, p. 1-3.
8. Ibid.
9. From personal experiences in the Army from 1985 to 1995.
10. Ibid.

**Part II: Interpretation**

**A: Nation of Islam**

1. Lee, p. 104-105.
2. Lee, p. 110-115.
3. CNN broadcast of a press conference by Louis Farrakhan, February 1995.
4. Conversations with other chaplains and personal experience, 1985-1995.

**B: American Muslim Mission**

1. Muhammad, *Prayer and Al Islam*, p. xvii ff.
2. From personal experiences in the Army from 1985 to 1995.
3. Fardan, *Understanding Self and Society*, p. 13 ff.
4. Ibid, p. 175 ff.
5. Haddad, ed. *The Muslims of America*, p. 177-185.
6. From conversations with other military chaplains, 1995.
7. Haddad, p. 1-24.

**C: The Buddhist Church in America (BCA).**

1. Layman, p. 40-41.
2. Ibid., p. 42-45.
3. Kashima, p. 206 ff.
4. Conversations with other military chaplains, 1995.
5. DA Pamphlets 165-13 and 165-13-1, 1978 & 1980.
6. Kashima, p. 206 ff.

**D: Zen Buddhism in America.**

1. Layman, p. 52-54.
2. Ibid., p. 78-80.
3. Personal experiences as an Army chaplain, 1985-1995.

E. Soka Gakkai International - USA

1. Metraux, p. 130 ff.
2. Ibid.
3. Personal experiences as an Army chaplain, 1985-1995.

F. Tibetan Buddhism in America.

1. Layman, p. 81-83.
2. Ibid., p. 104-105.
3. Ibid., p. 91 ff.
4. From personal experiences in the Army from 1985 to 1995.

G: U.S. Army

1. From personal experiences in the Army from 1985 to 1995.

Part III: Evaluation

1. From personal experiences in the Army from 1985 to 1995.
2. Ibid.
3. Conversation with Inam Hamad Ahmad Chebli, 14 March, 1995.
4. Conversations with other chaplains, 1995.
5. From personal experiences in the Army from 1985 to 1995.

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